

Fever is very common in children and can happen when your child has an infection. Most children recover quickly with no treatment.

When should you worry?

If your child has any of the following:

- Is under 3 months old with temperature more than 38°C or under 36°C (unless fever in the 48 hours following vaccinations and no other red features)
- Breathing very fast, too breathless to talk, eat or drink
- Working hard to breathe, drawing in of the muscles below the rib or noisy breathing (grunting)
- Is pale, blue, mottled or feels unusually cold to touch
- Difficult to wake up, very sleepy or confused
- Weak, high-pitched cry or can't be settled
- Has a fit (seizure)
- Has a rash that does go away with pressure (see the 'Glass Test')



RED

Your child needs urgent help

please phone 999 or go to the nearest hospital emergency (A+E) department

If your child has any of the following:

- Is 3-6 months old with temperature 39°C or above (unless fever in the 48 hours following vaccinations and no other red or amber features)
- Temperature of 38°C or above for more than 5 days or shivering with fever (rigors)
- Temperature less than 36°C in those over 3 months
- Breathing a bit faster than normal or working a bit harder to breathe
- Dry skin, lips or tongue
- Not had a wee or wet nappy in last 8 hours
- Poor feeding in babies (less than half of their usual amount)
- Irritable (unable to settle them with toys, TV, food or hugs even after their fever has come down)
- Swelling of a limb or joint
- Not using or putting weight on an arm, leg, hand or foot
- Complaining of severe pain that is not improving with painkillers
- Has had chickenpox in the past few days and is now getting worse with a high fever or spreading red rash
- Getting worse or you are worried about them



AMBER

You need to contact a doctor or nurse today

Please ring your GP surgery or contact NHS 111 - dial 111 or for children aged 5 years and above visit [111.nhs.uk](https://www.nhs.uk) If symptoms persist for 4 hours or more and you have not been able to speak to either a member of staff from your GP practice or to NHS 111 staff, recheck that your child has not developed any red features

If none of the above features are present

- Watch them closely for any change and look out for any red or amber symptoms
- If your child has any other symptoms associated with their fever, you may want to look at the information on sore throat, cough, earache, diarrhoea and vomiting or tummy ache or our other pathways.
- Additional advice is also available for families for help cope with crying in otherwise well babies



Self care

Continue providing your child's care at home. If you are still concerned about your child, call NHS 111 –

What should you do?

- Keep checking your child for red and amber signs and seek help if they are there.
- Fever is a normal response that helps your child's body to fight an infection.
- If your child seems unsettled or uncomfortable, you may wish to give your child paracetamol or ibuprofen.
- It can take 30 minutes for your child's temperature to start to fall and for your child to start to feel better after taking paracetamol or ibuprofen.
- If you have given your child one of these medicines and they are still uncomfortable 2 hours later you could try the other medicine.
- Paracetamol
 - There are different types of paracetamol for children of different ages including 2 different strengths of syrup - infant and Six plus. Always read the dose instructions carefully. You must wait at least 4 hours between doses. Do not give more than 4 doses in 24 hours.
- Ibuprofen
 - Ibuprofen is available in syrup and tablet form. Ibuprofen is not suitable for some children. If you are unsure whether your child can take ibuprofen, check with your pharmacist or doctor. Always read the dose instructions carefully. Don't give ibuprofen if your child has not had a wee in the last 12 hours. You must wait at least 6 hours between doses. Do not give more than 3 doses in 24 hours.
 - It can be normal for the temperature to go back up when the medicine wears off.
- Avoid tepid sponging your child. It doesn't actually reduce your child's temperature and may cause your child to shiver.
- Encourage them to drink plenty of fluids.
- If a rash appears, do the glass test.

How long will your child's symptoms last?

- Fever caused by a viral infection tends to improve within 2 to 3 days.
- If your child's fever lasts for more than 5 days, get them assessed by your GP