

Discharge Advice for Carers of Children Under 5 Years Old Who Have a Fever

Introduction

Your child has been assessed and is well enough to go home but if they get worse or get any of the red or amber features below you should contact a doctor.

RED

You need urgent help – please phone 999 to get immediate advice or go to the nearest accident and emergency department:

- If your child becomes difficult to rouse
- If your child develops a weak, high-pitched or continuous cry
- If your child has a fit
- If your child becomes pale and floppy
- If your child is finding it hard to breathe
- If your child develops a rash that does not disappear with pressure (see the 'tumbler test' on page 5)

AMBER

You need to see or speak to a health professional today. Please ring your GP surgery, call NHS direct on **0845 46 47** or phone the hospital switchboard on **01392 411611** and ask for whichever ward or department your child was discharged from:

- If your child's health gets worse or you are worried
- If the fever lasts longer than 5 days
- If your child is not drinking or is passing less urine than usual
- If your child has signs of dehydration including a dry mouth, no tears, sunken eyes, a sunken fontanelle (soft spot on a baby's head), drowsiness and generally seems more unwell

GREEN

Use the advice overleaf to provide the care your child needs at home

- If your child has none of the above

What to do when your child has a fever

Preventing dehydration

Offer your child regular drinks (where a baby or child is breastfed the most appropriate fluid is breast milk).

Look for signs of dehydration:

- sunken fontanelle (soft spot on a baby's head)
- dry mouth
- sunken eyes
- no tears
- poor overall appearance

If you find signs of dehydration encourage your child to drink more fluids and seek further advice if you are worried.

Clothing

Children with fever should not be under dressed or over wrapped.

Medicines to reduce temperature

Medicines (paracetamol or ibuprofen) to treat your child's temperature will not get your child better more quickly or prevent febrile fits but if your child has a fever and is distressed or unwell then giving them either paracetamol or ibuprofen can make them feel more comfortable. Please follow the instructions on the bottle carefully. Do not give paracetamol and ibuprofen at the same time. If your child has not improved 2-3 hours later, then you may wish to try giving the other medicine.

Sponging

Do not sponge your child with water. This does not help reduce fever.

Checking on your Child

Check on your child during the night for a rash and to see if they are getting better. If a rash appears, do the 'tumbler test' (see guidance below). If you are concerned that your child is not improving contact your GP, NHS direct, or phone the hospital switchboard on **01392 411611** and ask for whichever ward or department your child was discharged from.

Keep your child away from nursery or school while they have a fever and notify the school or nursery of the illness.

The 'tumbler test'

Do the 'tumbler test' if your child has a rash. Press a glass tumbler firmly against the rash. If you can see the spots through the glass and they do not fade, this is called a 'non-blanching rash'. If this rash is present seek medical advice immediately. The rash is harder to see on dark skin so check paler areas such as the palms of the hands, soles of the feet, tummy and inside the eyelids.



Photo courtesy of the Meningitis Research Foundation

Reference

www.nice.org.uk Feverish illness in children under 5 years' guideline

This information can be offered in other formats on request, including a language other than English and Braille.

RD&E Main Switchboard: 01392 411611

For RDUH services log on to: www.royaldevon.nhs.uk

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