



## The Truth about Fever

By Dr. Shannon Austin

Fever is temperature of 100.4 or greater.

The best way to check temperature in infants is rectally (You will not hurt them. Their poop is bigger than the thermometer!). In older children, oral is best.

Fever is not the enemy! It is our body's defense mechanism to fight infection. Therefore, you do not need to treat fever in most cases. If your child is very uncomfortable or in pain, then it is appropriate to treat.

You may treat fever with ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin) or acetaminophen (Tylenol). Dosing for acetaminophen is every 4-6 hours. Dosing for ibuprofen is every 6-8 hours. Please follow the dosing amount and instructions on the medication label and call the office if you have any questions regarding dosage. To avoid dosing errors and toxicity, it is best to use one fever reducer rather than alternating between acetaminophen and ibuprofen.

Fever will not cause brain damage. Our body raises our temperature to fight infection, not itself. Brain damage and hyperthermia occur when outside forces, such as being left in a hot car, overwhelm our body's ability to regulate its own temperature.

High fever does not cause seizures. Rapidly rising temperatures can. If your child has a high fever, he/she has likely already missed the window when a seizure typically occurs.

You do not need to wake your child up to check for or treat fever. Let your child rest! They need the fever and rest to help them get better.

Generally, you do not need to take your child to the ER or clinic immediately when they start with fever. The most likely cause for fever is a viral illness and it should pass in 3-5 days. Exceptions are for fever in infants < 3 months old, children with focal complaints such as ear pain or sore throat, or children with lethargy, inconsolable irritability, dehydration, trouble breathing, or other serious symptoms.