

# Fever in Infants and Children

What is a normal temperature?

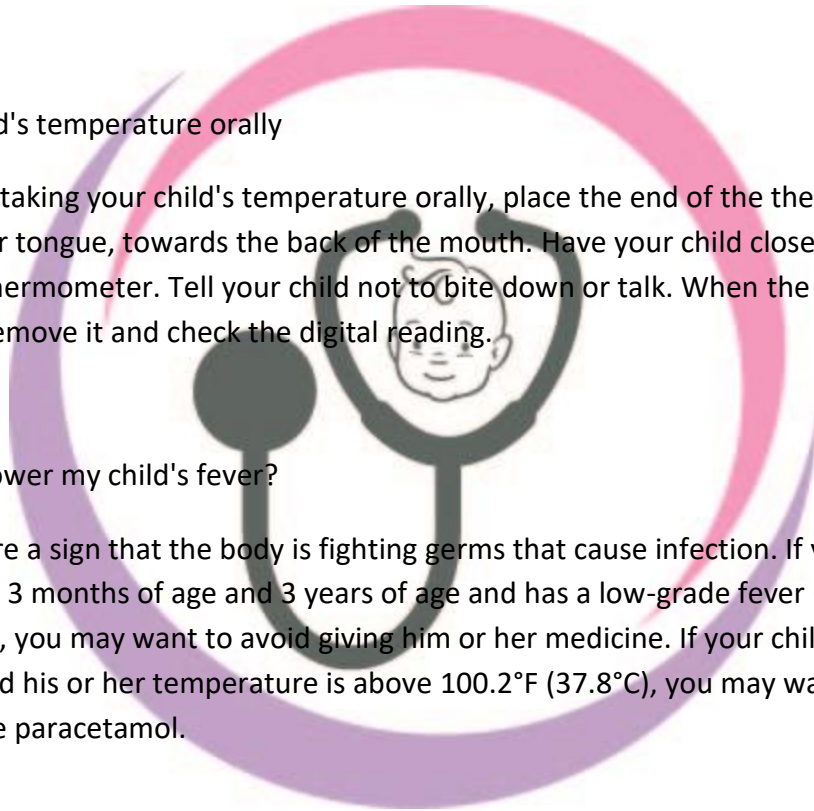
- A normal temperature is about 98.6°F (37°C) when taken orally (in your child's mouth) and 99.6°F (37.5°C) when taken rectally (in your child's bottom).
- Many doctors define a fever as an oral temperature above 99.5°F (37.5°C) or a rectal temperature above 100.4°F (38°C).

Taking your child's temperature orally

- If you're taking your child's temperature orally, place the end of the thermometer under his or her tongue, towards the back of the mouth. Have your child close his or her lips on the thermometer. Tell your child not to bite down or talk. When the thermometer beeps, remove it and check the digital reading.

Should I try to lower my child's fever?

- Fevers are a sign that the body is fighting germs that cause infection. If your child is between 3 months of age and 3 years of age and has a low-grade fever (up to 100.2°F [37.8°C]), you may want to avoid giving him or her medicine. If your child is achy and fussy, and his or her temperature is above 100.2°F (37.8°C), you may want to give him or her some paracetamol.
- If your baby is younger than 3 months of age and has a rectal temperature of 100.4°F (38°C) or higher, call the doctor or go to the emergency room right away. A fever can be a sign of a serious infection in young babies.



What kind of medicine should I give my child, and how much?

- Do not give any medicine to babies who are younger than 2 months of age without talking to your doctor first.
- Acetaminophen (one brand name: Children's Calpol/Crocin) relieves pain and lowers fever. Ask your doctor about the correct dosage for your child. The correct dosage depends on your child's weight and age.
- Ibuprofen is another medicine that can be used to lower a fever in children older than 6 months of age. Talk to your doctor before giving ibuprofen (two brand names: imol, combiflam) to your child. Your doctor will tell you the correct dose for your child.

What else can I do to help my child feel better?

- Give your child plenty of fluids to drink to prevent dehydration (not enough fluid in the body) and help the body cool itself. Water, clear soups, tender coconut and fresh juices are good choices.
- If your child is getting enough fluids, don't force him or her to eat if he or she doesn't feel like it.
- Make sure your child gets plenty of rest.
- Keep the room temperature at about 26 to 30°C.
- Dress your child in light cotton pajamas. Overdressing can trap body heat and cause your child's temperature to rise.
- If your child has chills, give him or her an extra blanket. Remove it when the chills stop.

Tips on giving medicine

- Don't give more than 5 doses in 1 day.
- Don't give a baby younger than 3 months of age any medicine unless your doctor tells you to.

- Read package labels carefully. Make sure you are giving your child the right amount of medicine.
- For liquid medicines, use a special liquid measuring device to be sure you give the right dose. Get one at your drug store or ask your pharmacist. An ordinary kitchen teaspoon may not hold the right amount of medicine.

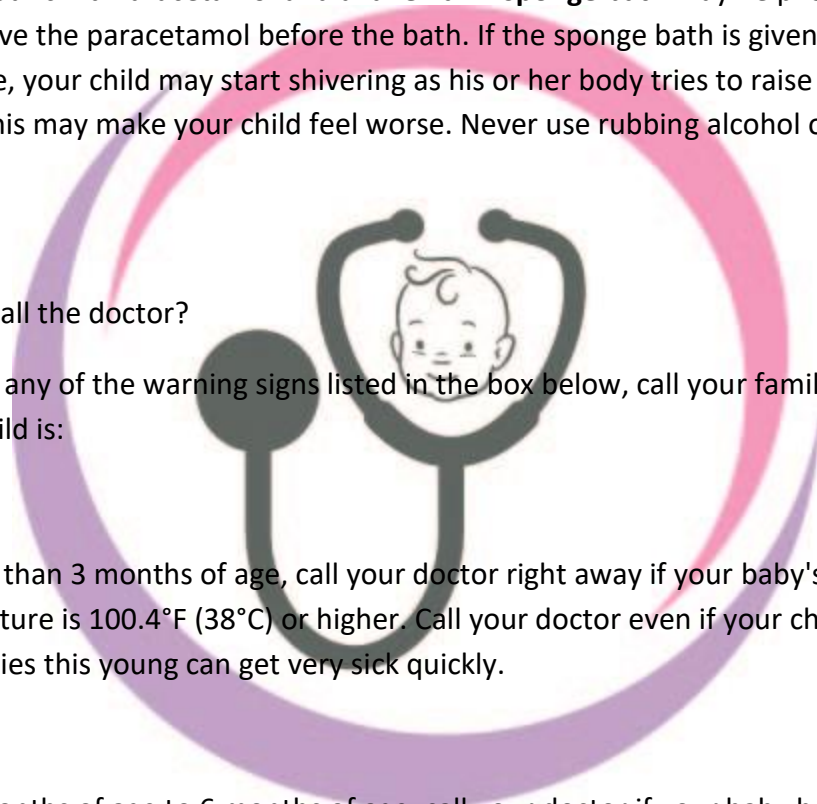
Will a bath help lower my child's fever?

- Giving your child Paracetamol and a **lukewarm sponge bath** may help lower his or her fever. Give the paracetamol before the bath. If the sponge bath is given without medicine, your child may start shivering as his or her body tries to raise its temperature again. This may make your child feel worse. Never use rubbing alcohol or cold water for baths.

When should I call the doctor?

If your child has any of the warning signs listed in the box below, call your family doctor right away. If your child is:

- Younger than 3 months of age, call your doctor right away if your baby's rectal temperature is 100.4°F (38°C) or higher. Call your doctor even if your child doesn't seem sick. Babies this young can get very sick quickly.
- Three months of age to 6 months of age, call your doctor if your baby has a temperature of 101°F (38.3°C) or higher, even if your baby doesn't seem sick.
- Six months of age and older and has a fever of 102°F (38.8°C) to 102.9°F (39.4°C), watch how he or she acts. Call your doctor if the fever rises or lasts for more than 2 days.
- Six months of age and older and has a fever of 103°F (39.4°C) or higher, call your doctor even if your child seems to feel fine.



Call your doctor if your baby or child has any of these warning signs

- Constant vomiting or diarrhea
- Dry mouth
- Earache or pulling at ears
- Fever comes and goes for more than 3-4 days
- High-pitched crying
- Irritability
- No appetite
- Pale appearance
- Seizures
- Severe headache
- Skin rash
- Sore or swollen joints
- Sore throat
- Stiff neck
- Stomach pain
- Swelling of the soft spot on an infant's head
- Unresponsiveness or limpness
- Wheezing or problems breathing
- Whimpering

