

## **FEVERS**

### **Current Anticipatory guidance Recommendations and Education (CARE)**

#### **What is a Fever?**

- Fever is a temperature above **100.4<sup>o</sup> F (or 38.0<sup>o</sup> C)**. Which is above normal body temperature.
- It is a **normal body reaction** to get rid of an infection.
- Fever's are not harmful to a baby or child's brain even when they get high.
- This is not the same thing as hyperthermia which can occur with overheating and can be dangerous.
- The **height of the fever is not important** but your child's discomfort and/or willingness to drink fluids are. The longer the fever lasts is also important as it can lead to dehydration.
- Fever is most accurate when measured rectally in babies but may also be done by mouth or under the arm.
- Fevers in children is **most often due to viruses** which do not improve with antibiotics.

#### **What should I expect?**

- Fevers may go up and down every 4 - 6 hours whether you give medications or not.
- Many kids do not want to eat or drink when they have a fever
- If they eat less this is OK but they **need to keep taking in fluids**
- Often when the fever is not controlled kids will not drink
- Some kids also complain of headache, body aches, and vomit when their temperature goes up.
- The height of the fever does not tell you how bad the illness is.

\*Did you know?

TYLENOL = ACETAMINOPHEN  
MOTRIN, ADVIL = IBUPROFEN

Many medications have more than one name because of generic and brand name types.  
Generic and brand types work the same  
Ibuprofen/Motrin may only be given to children over 6 months

#### **What can I do for my child?**

##### **Fever Control**

- **Treat your child with Acetaminophen and Ibuprofen** (over 6 months old) for fever if they have a temperature or appear uncomfortable or unwilling to drink.
- These medications come in many different types and dosages. It is important to know the correct dose for your child (based on their weight).
- Make sure your child is getting medications as indicated and not more often than prescribed.
- **Treat discomfort, not a number.** Fever can help cure the infection but should be treated if it interferes with rest or adequate drinking.
- Do not use Aspirin for children

- **Over-the-counter medications advertised for cough and congestion are not recommended and can be dangerous** in some children. They often contain Acetaminophen and/or Ibuprofen.

#### Hydration

- Make sure your child **stays hydrated**. Children under 1 year old should continue formula/breast feeding as well as electrolyte solutions.
- Children older than 1 year old. should drink plenty of fluids such as water, electrolyte solutions or popsicles.
- Your child may not feel like fluids when their fever is poorly controlled.
- Your child might not feel like eating while they are sick and this is ok as long as they stay hydrated. They will catch up on eating when they are better.

#### How long with my child be sick for?

- Your child may have a cough, runny nose, stuffiness due to a virus for several weeks.
- The fever usually lasts for less than 5 days in a row.
- If antibiotics were prescribed they need to be completed even if you child is feeling better.

#### When should I get immediate attention?

- Remember fevers help to fight infection. They are not the problem unless they are causing your child to feel unwell.
- All kids should **follow up with their regular doctors** a few days after being in the ER
- If your child is very fussy and does not get better even when the fever is down
- If our child is not acting normally with treatment
- If your child is showing signs of dehydrated with no wet diapers over 8 to 10 hours, is crying without tears, has a dry mouth, or is refusing to drink any fluids
- If your child has a stiff neck and/or headache
- If your child has other symptoms including a rash, joint swelling or pain,
- If fever lasts more than 5 days in a row
- **\*\*\*Any child under 3 months with a fever or with a chronic illness such as sickle cell disease or on immunosuppressive medications needs to be seen by a doctor immediately\*\*\***

### **One method for fever control: Alternate Acetaminophen and Ibuprofen every 3 hours:**

1st dose

3 hours after 1st dose

6 hours after 1st dose

12 hours after 1st dose

Give **Acetaminophen**

Give **Ibuprofen**

Give **Acetaminophen**

Give **Ibuprofen**