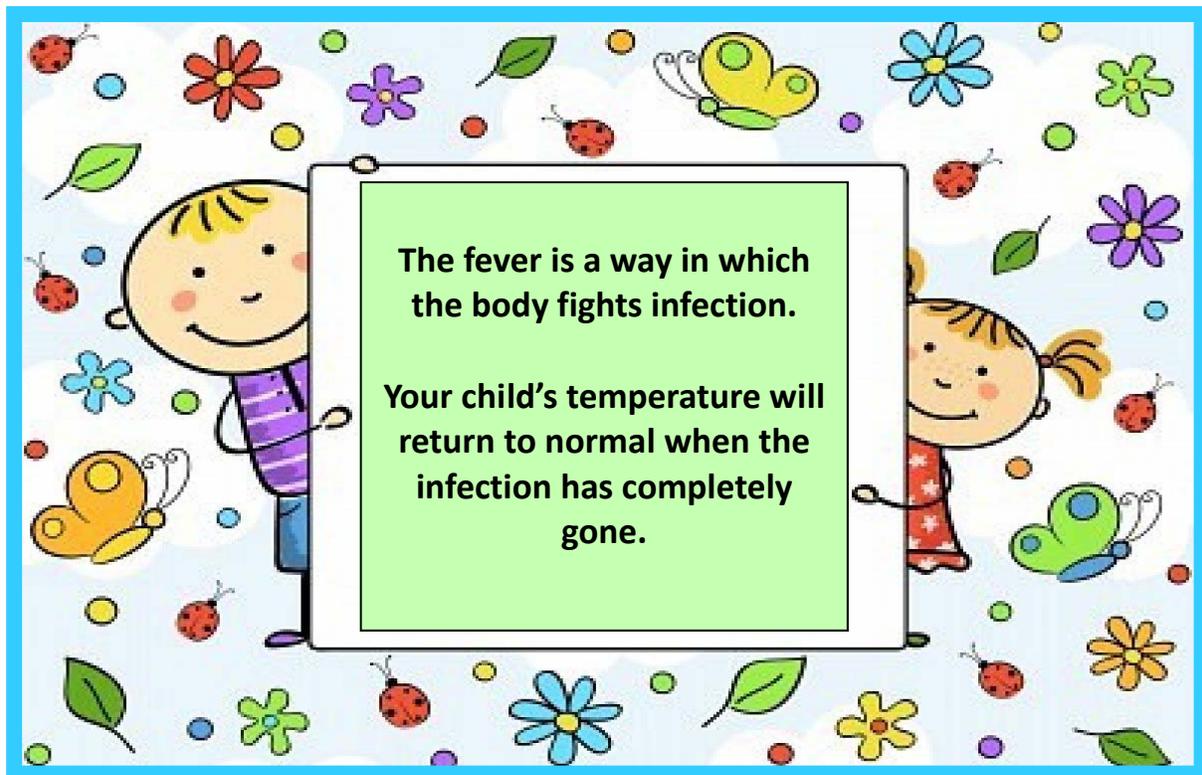


Tell Me All About...

High temperature and febrile convulsion



Your child has been ill with an infection or a virus which has caused their temperature to rise.



The fever is a way in which
the body fights infection.

Your child's temperature will
return to normal when the
infection has completely
gone.

Bacterial infections are treated with antibiotics. Virus infections, which are far more common, do not need antibiotics.

How do I know when my child's temperature is high?

If your child is unwell or feels hot, it may be because he or she has a temperature. You can take your child's temperature using:

- A thermometer underneath their arm (all ages).
- A thermometer in their ear (above 1 month)—however these can be difficult to use and may not be accurate.
- A thermometer under their tongue (above 5 years).

Forehead thermometer strips are **not** recommended as they are not reliable. In children, any temperature of 38°C (100.4°F) or above is considered high and is classed as a fever.

What to do when your child has a temperature?

Allow your child to lose heat through their skin. If your child feels hot then take most, but not all, of their clothes off.

- **Do not** wrap them up, even if they complain of feeling cold
- Keep the room well ventilated.
- If you have an electric fan then this will help to keep the room cool, although do not place it so that it is blowing directly onto your child.
- Encourage your child to have frequent amounts of clear fluids.

Give paracetamol, according to the dose on the bottle or as prescribed by the paediatrician, this can be repeated every 4 – 6 hours and no more than 4 times in a 24 hour period.

Depending on the age of your child Ibruprofen may also be used. This can be given 6-8 hourly no more than 3 times in a 24 hour period.

How do I know if I need to seek medical attention?

We recommend that you see a doctor if your child has any of the following symptoms:

- Complaining of a stiff neck or light hurting their eyes.
- Vomiting or refusing to drink much.
- Rash
- More sleepy than usual.
- Problems with breathing.
- In pain.
- Convulsion.

Also see your doctor if:

- Your child is under 3 months and has a fever.
- The fever persists after 48 hours.

If you are able to give your child both of the above medications it is a good idea to stagger them in order for your child to have temperature controlling medications regularly. It will help if you keep a record of what you have given.

Febrile convulsions

Febrile convulsions are fits (seizures) that sometimes happen in children (usually between 6 months and 6 years) who have a high fever. They can be worrying for parents but they do not usually cause any long term health effects. There is nothing you can do to predict or prevent a febrile convulsion but knowing what to do if it does happen may help you and your child:

- It is important to remain calm and stay with your child.
- Place your child on the floor or bed on their side.
- Make sure you do not put anything in their mouth.
- Try to watch exactly what happens so that you can describe it later.
- Time how long the convulsion lasts. Time seems longer than it is when your child is having a convulsion but it is important to time it
- Seek medical advice immediately.
- If the fit lasts longer than 4- 5mins call 999

How are febrile convulsions treated?

Efforts will be made to reduce your child's temperature giving them regular paracetamol and where possible ibuprofen. Encouraging cool drinks is very important, this can even be done by a syringe and giving small amounts every few minutes.

Investigations may be carried out while your child is on nightingale ward to find out why your child has had a febrile convulsion, e.g. blood tests or x-rays. This is routine. Once the doctor is satisfied they will discharge. After going home you may have to keep a close eye on your child's temperature over the next few days. Using the advice in this leaflet will help you in future.

