

### What is a fever?

Your child's normal temperature is usually 37°C (degrees Celsius). If their temperature is 38°C this is described as a mild fever and anything above 39°C is a high fever. Therefore a fever is another name for a high temperature.

A fever does not always mean your child has a serious illness. A fever is a sign of infection which is usually caused by a virus or sometimes by bacteria. The fever is a way in which the body fights infection, and your child's temperature will return to normal when the infection has completely gone.

Bacterial infections are treated with antibiotics but viral infections, which are more common, do not need antibiotics.

### Seek immediate medical attention if your child has a fever and is:

- 3 months old or younger
- Has a rash
- Complains of a stiff neck or of the light hurting their eyes
- Has not improved in 48 hours since the fever started
- Is very pale or feels cold to touch
- Is floppy, sleepy or drowsy
- Has a severe headache or any other severe pain
- Has trouble breathing, has noisy breathing or is breathing faster than normal
- Refuses to drink anything even small sips
- Has not had a wee

- Vomits a lot and cannot keep any fluids, even sips down. Or if your child's vomit is green fluid (bile) or there is blood in the vomit
- Has a febrile convulsion (seizure like activity) – see below for more information

### Caring for your child

- Dress your child in light clothing to keep them comfortable and not increase their temperature
- Give small, frequent drinks of clear fluid, eg water and diluted juice
- A fever does not necessarily require treatment with medication. Looking for the cause is often more important
- Paracetamol should be given only if your child is irritable, miserable or appears to be in pain
- Giving Paracetamol has not been shown to prevent febrile convulsions
- Do not continue to give your child regular Paracetamol for more than 48 hours without having the child assessed by a doctor
- Aspirin **should not** be given

### Febrile Convulsion

Some children react to a sudden rise in temperature by having a febrile convulsion.

**A febrile convulsion is not dangerous but:-**

- During a convulsion your child may

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become rigid and their arms and legs start to twitch and jerk. Their eyes may stare or roll back.

- Some children become floppy without movement of their arms and legs
- **Keep Calm** there is nothing you can do to stop the febrile convulsion
- Take note of the time the convulsion starts and when it ends
- Do not restrain your child and do not put anything in their mouth
- Protect your child from injury by placing them in a safe position, such as lying on the ground. It is best not to put your child on a bed or cot as they could fall during the convulsion
- Stay with your child and keep their face clear from any obstructions
- Once the convulsion has ended (they rarely last longer than three minutes, although it seems a lot longer) lie your child on their side, reassure them.
- Call your GP to get an urgent appointment, or take your child to an after hours medical centre
- If the convulsion lasts more than 5 minutes, or you notice any of the symptoms listed above, call an ambulance immediately - 111

## Who to Contact:

If you have any concerns or questions about your child's health please contact your GP or After Hours Medical Centre.

### After hours medical centres

#### Kenepuru Hospital Accident & Medical

Open 24hrs a day everyday (04) 918 2300

#### Paraparaumu -Team Medical Coastlands Shoppingtown

Open 8am -10pm everyday (04) 298 2228

#### Waikanae Medical Centre

Mon-Thurs 7pm-8am, Fri 5pm-8am, and at anytime during weekends or Public Holidays

(04) 293 6002

#### Accident & Urgent Medical Centre Wellington

Open 8am-11pm every day (04) 384 4944

### Healthline

If you are unsure if your child needs to visit your GP or Afterhours Medical Centre you may wish to call Healthline for free advice. Call free anytime on 0800 611 116

**Remember**  
**In an emergency call 111**