



# Children's fever and pain management: information for parents and caregivers


*Pharmacies all over Canada are working with manufacturers, distributors, governments and others to address the current supply challenges affecting pediatric formulations of fever and pain medications.*

## What is a fever?

- A fever is a rise in body temperature above normal range
- It is usually a sign that the body is fighting an infection
- A fever itself is generally harmless and possibly even helpful
- Fevers don't always need to be treated
- How your child looks and behaves is most important

Method	Normal temperature range
rectum	36.6°C to 37.9°C (97.9°F to 100.2°F)
mouth	35.5°C to 37.5°C (95.9°F to 99.5°F)
armpit	36.5°C to 37.5°C (95.9°F to 99.5°F)
ear	35.8°C to 37.9°C (96.4°F to 100.2°F)

Acknowledgement: information in this tip sheet has been adapted from materials produced by CHEO and the William Osler Health System



**Have questions?**  
Speak to a registered nurse  
24/7 by calling Health  
Connect Ontario  
Dial 811 or  
1-866-797-0000



**Mackenzie Health**  
3200 Major Mackenzie Drive  
Vaughan ON L6A 4Z3  
T 905-417-2000 F 905-883-0772  
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## Taking care of a child with fever at home

When a child is sick, one of the main goals is to relieve discomfort and promote rest. Treating a fever does not impact the length of time you are sick.

- Give extra fluids. Children need to drink more water when they have a fever.
- Dress your child lightly in one layer of clothing. Don't wrap your child in blankets, even if they are shivering.
- You may use acetaminophen or ibuprofen when an infant or child is in pain or is uncomfortable because of a fever.
- Do not use Aspirin® (acetylsalicylic acid) to treat a child's fever.

## What do I do if I need to use acetaminophen or ibuprofen?

Your pharmacist can help you choose the right formulation for your child's needs based on what products are available.

- It is best to use a pediatric measuring cup, spoon or syringe to give liquid medications to children.
- These medications come in a variety of dosage forms which may vary in strength, such as liquids, chewable tablets, regular tablets and rectal suppositories.
- Always refer to the package for product-specific dosing instructions or speak with a pharmacist to ensure a safe dose is being given. Do not give more than the maximum number of doses per day as noted on the medication package.
- In some cases, tablets that are used for adults can be modified for children with caution depending on the child's age, size, and ability to swallow solid medications (e.g., tablets can be split).

Always talk to a health care provider to discuss what options are appropriate and safe for your child.

## When to see your family doctor

You should visit your family doctor if your child:

- has a fever for more than 4 days
- is not getting better after one week of symptoms
- develops an earache

## When to come to the Emergency Department (ED)

You know your child best. Visit the ED if your child:

- is under three months old and has a fever
- is very irritable or sleepy and doesn't improve with medicine
- has difficulty breathing
- shows signs of dehydration (dry mouth, not peeing at least every eight hours)
- has a headache or sore neck that doesn't go away

### How much should I give?

Acetaminophen and ibuprofen come in different concentrations (the number of mg of medicine in each mL, tablet or suppository). Check the concentration on the bottle and read the package directions carefully.

### Ibuprofen

#### Dosing

1 to 6 months old: 5 mg/kg as needed every 8 hours

6 months and over: 10 mg/kg as needed every 6 hours

Child's weight \_\_\_\_\_ kg

Child's dose \_\_\_\_\_ mg

#### Instructions

- Give \_\_\_\_\_ mL of 200mg/5mL infant drops
- Give \_\_\_\_\_ mL of 100mg/5mL children's liquid
- Give \_\_\_\_\_ tablets of 100 mg chewable tablet(s)
- Give \_\_\_\_\_ tablets of 200 mg tablet(s)
- Give \_\_\_\_\_ tablets of 400 mg tablet(s)

### Acetaminophen

#### Dosing

Child's weight \_\_\_\_\_ kg      Child's dose \_\_\_\_\_ mg

#### Instructions

- Give \_\_\_\_\_ mL of 80mg/mL infant drops
- Give \_\_\_\_\_ mL of 160mg/5mL children's liquid
- Give \_\_\_\_\_ tablets of 80 mg chewable tablet(s)
- Give \_\_\_\_\_ tablets of 325 mg tablet(s)
- Give \_\_\_\_\_ tablets of 500 mg tablet(s)