



## FAMIPED

**Familias, Pediatras y Adolescentes en la Red. Mejores padres, mejores hijos.**

## Fever

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**Palabras clave:** [antipyretic medicines](#) [2], [fever](#) [3]

### What is fever?

Fever is an increase in the body temperature when it goes beyond the normal limits. It is not a disease, it is other diseases' symptom.

Fever is observed when the temperature is over 38 degrees centigrade.

### What is the cause of fever?

The most frequent cause of fever, especially in infants and babies, are infections. These are normally viruses and, less frequently, bacterial infections.

Excessive clothing and hot and sometimes dehydration cause fever.

Fever can also be observed as a manifestation of other diseases (rheumatologic illnesses, poisoning, ...) although this rarely occurs.

### Is it serious or contagious?

Fever on its own is not contagious. Some of the diseases that cause fever can be especially viral infections.

On its own, it must not be regarded as serious and it does not cause brain damage.

Nor the degree of fever that a baby has neither their response to medicines are indications of seriousness.

### Is fever useful in any way?

## Fever

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Fever is part of our organism's defence mechanisms. Increasing our temperature activates our defence mechanisms and helps them to work better.

### **How do we know if our baby has a fever?**

There are some facts that can help us detect fever, such as: increase in the heart beat, increase of breathing, skin redness, hot sensation when touching the baby, etc. However, the best way to confirm it is to measure it with a thermometer.

The sale of mercury thermometers is currently forbidden.

There are different kinds of thermometers. The most trustworthy are digital ones.

### **Must fever be always treated?**

You do not always need to treat fever. Remember that it is part of our defence mechanisms. We must treat it if it provokes unease or discomfort or it is high. It must also be treated in babies who suffer from serious diseases that affect heart, lungs, bronchi and nervous system.

### **How is fever treated?**

Antipyretic medicines are used to treat fever. The one that we should use most is paracetamol, orally or rectally. The dosage depends on the baby's weight and it can be administered every 4-6 hours. Iboprufen can also be used, every 6-8 hours. Its dosage depends on weight too. It must not be used with babies under 6 months.

You must not change from antipyretic medicine into another, only in specific situations and always under medical prescription.

Remember to keep medicines away from children.

Antipyretic medicines do not take away fever and they must not be used unless the paediatrician recommends so.

It is very important that the baby is well hydrated, making sure that they regularly drink liquids.

### **We must visit our paediatrician if the baby:**

Has a high fever (over 40 degrees).

Is under two years old and has fever for more than 24-48 hours.

Is over two years old and has fever for more than 48-72 hours.

Has spots in their skin that have appeared at the same time than fever did or in the previous hours.

Is very irritable, crying is intense and difficult to calm or feels weak (in spite of decreasing fever).

Refuses food and liquids continuously.

Does not urinate or urine is very scarce.

Has a strange or abnormal circumstance that appears with fever.

### **While fever exists, we must monitor:**

Their general state, colour, breathing. Look if there are spots.

Their behaviour and attitude: if they feel drowsy, very irritable, with excessive crying or weakness.

If they have a specific pain (throat, ear, chest, abdomen, head, etc)

If they have problems to move their neck (stiffness).

If they have problems or disorders when breathing.

If urine smells bad, its colour is different to the common one or it is very scarce.

If they vomit or have continuous or very frequent diarrhoeas.

### **When must we go to emergency services?**

If some of the following situations occur you must **go urgently to emergency services**. Although this does not mean, compulsorily, that they have a serious disease.

- Fever in a baby under 3 months.
- High fever and some serious chronic disease (heart malformation, immunodeficiency, cancer under chemotherapy treatment, etc).
- Neck stiffness, difficulty to flex the neck.
- Recent skin spots, dark red or purple, which do not disappear when stretching the surrounding skin.
- Weakness, irritability or excessive crying and difficult to calm.
- Convulsion or loss of consciousness.
- Problems when breathing (ribs can be noticed and the breastbone is sunk, whistles are heard when breathing, very quick, agitated breathing, etc.).
- Abundant, nearly constant vomits.

### **Where to find more information (in Spanish) on the Internet**

*Decálogo de la fiebre de la AEPAP.*

Available in: <http://www.aepap.org/biblioteca/ayuda-en-la-consulta/decalogo-de-la-fiebre> [4]

*Familia y salud: fiebre.* Available in: <http://www.familiaysalud.es/nos-preocupa-que/fiebre> [5]

*Kidshealth: La fiebre y cómo tomar la temperatura de su hijo.* Available in:

[http://kidshealth.org/parent/h1n1\\_center/h1n1\\_center\\_esp/fever\\_esp.html](http://kidshealth.org/parent/h1n1_center/h1n1_center_esp/fever_esp.html) [6]

*Guía de Salud proceso fiebre en la infancia, información para pacientes*

[http://www.juntadeandalucia.es/salud/export/sites/cs salud/galerias/documentos/c\\_6\\_c\\_7\\_guias\\_de\\_informacion\\_para\\_pacientes/guia\\_fiebre\\_infancia.pdf](http://www.juntadeandalucia.es/salud/export/sites/cs salud/galerias/documentos/c_6_c_7_guias_de_informacion_para_pacientes/guia_fiebre_infancia.pdf) [7]