

小兒發燒的處理

Management of fever in children

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■ What is fever?

- Our body temperature is controlled by the hypothalamus. Normal body temperature is around 36.5 to 37.9C (rectal or ear temperature), or 35.9~36.9 (axillary temperature). Fever is a body temperature that is above normal range. Generally speaking, body temperature that is above 38C (rectal or ear temperature) or 37C (axillary temperature) is considered fever.
- Fever is a normal physiological response. It is usually caused by a pathogen, such as virus. Childhood fever is usually caused by virus, which stimulates the white blood cell to release certain cytokines that cause the body temperature to rise.

- Higher body temperature is not always associated with severe diseases. There is no need to panic once fever is noted, but it is important to find the cause.
- Fever itself does not cause damage to the brain unless it is above 41.7C or it is caused by meningitis / encephalitis.
- Reducing fever is about relieving the symptoms associated with fever; not treating the disease itself.

■ Causes of fever

- A myriad of infections, including respiratory tract infection, gastrointestinal tract infection, urinary tract infection, acute otitis media, pneumonia, meningitis, malignancy, or autoimmune diseases.
- Summer fever in children occurs more often when room temperature is above 28C, usually in children less than 3 years of age. Keeping room temperature between 23~24C is suggested.
- If your child wears heavy clothes or stays in a place that is too warm.

- After your child exercises, eats, cries or takes a bath (usually not more than 0.5C in such conditions).

- **Management of fever**

- Check body temperature properly, remember especially to straighten the ear canal so that you can get an accurate body temperature. For children younger than 3 years of age, pull the pinna down and back; for children older than 3 years of age, pull the pinna up and back.

- Closely monitor your child's behaviors and condition, such as crying, poor appetite, lethargy, etc.

- Record the pattern of the fever, including duration, fever peak, and other symptoms for your doctor's reference.

- Management of different degrees of fever

- ◆ Mild fever

- Rectal temperature or ear temperature 38 ~ 38.5C
- Antipyretic is not needed. Drinking more water is usually sufficient.

- ◆ Moderate fever

- Rectal temperature or ear temperature 38.5~38.8C
- Take oral antipyretic as instructed. Wear adequate clothing or get a blanket in case of chills or feeling cold.

- ◆ High fever

- Rectal temperature or ear temperature >38.8C
- Take oral antipyretic or use rectal antipyretic as instructed. Wear sufficient clothing or get a blanket in case of chills or feeling cold. You may provide your child with a warm bath and a towel, which will facilitate dilatation of the capillaries so that the fever can be reduced.

- Do not use alcohol to wipe the body.

- For a child with fever convulsion, once axillary temperature is above 37.5C or rectal (or ear) temperature is above 38.5C, you may use a rectal antipyretic and bring your child to the hospital immediately.

- Attention for taking antipyretic

- ◆ If body temperature is above 38.8C an hour after oral antipyretic use, you may give your child a rectal antipyretic.
- ◆ Another dose of rectal antipyretic should be given at least 6 hours after the previous dose so that hypothermia can be avoided.
- If your child suffers from seizures, lethargy, decreased activity, abnormal crying, decreased appetite or persistent fever for more than 3 days, bring your child to the hospital immediately.

Should you have any inquiries related to management of fever in children, please contact our staff anytime.

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We will be more than happy to assist you.

Sincerely, Cathay General Hospital.

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