



What to expect, what to look for and what to do when your child has a fever

What to expect, what to look for and what to do

What to expect

- 1–4 days of fluctuating fever
- 1–4 days of fluctuating alertness, activity, a social responsiveness (A's)
- Signs such as a sore throat or runny nose are common

What to look for

- Progressive unrelieved deterioration in the **A's**
- Increase in breathing effort
- Unusual episodes of appearing pale (called pallor)
- Taking 2 or more seconds for the colour to return to normal when the skin is pressed (called capillary refill)
- Failure to pass urine 4 or 5 times in 24 hour periods
 - A rash of 1–2 mm red or purple spots that do not disappear when pressed

Reassess the ABCDs every 4–6 hours

A = Alertness, **A**ctivity, **A** social responsiveness

B = increased work of **B**reathing

C = **C**irculation



D = Dehydration (fluid in and fluid out)

When caring for an ill child at home:

- offer your child regular drinks (if you are breastfeeding then breast milk is best)
- look for signs that your child may be dehydrated (dry mouth, no tears, sunken eyes, sunken fontanelle – the soft spot on a baby's head)
- encourage your child to drink more fluids if they are dehydrated, and seek further advice if you are worried
- ensure you know how to look for and identify a non-blanching rash (a rash that does not disappear with pressure) that could be a sign of meningitis
- check on your child during the night
- keep your child away from school, kindergarten or childcare while they have a fever, and notify them of your child's absence.

Fever is a natural and healthy response to infection, so do not try to reduce your child's fever by over or under dressing them. Sponging them with water is no longer recommended and may in fact increase core body temperature and not be beneficial to the child.

Where to get further advice

- Call the practice on _____
- Call the afterhours service on _____
- Your local hospital emergency department _____
- The Royal Children's Hospital Melbourne [Kids Health Info fact sheets](#)



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