

Managing Fever in Children *Information Sheet for Parents*

What is Fever and How to Measure It?

Fever is a body temperature of 38.0°C or higher. It is generally not dangerous in itself if well tolerated by the child. The following advice aims to provide comfort to the child. The temperature should be measured with a thermometer. It is recommended to use a rectal thermometer, especially for young children. If you measure the temperature under the arm, add 0.5°C to the displayed temperature to get the actual temperature. You can also use an ear thermometer. Avoid non-contact forehead thermometers as they are less reliable and can give inaccurate results. Fever is most often caused by viruses (flu, cold viruses, COVID, etc.) or bacteria, which can be contagious. It is therefore important to avoid contact between the child and especially vulnerable people.

How to Lower the Temperature and Manage the Fever?

- **Undress your child** (in a onesie, diaper, or underwear).
- **Air out the room** and adjust the ambient temperature between 18°C and 20°C.
- **Remove blankets, sleep sacks, and any too-warm clothing.**
- Use a **damp cloth (with lukewarm water)** to apply to the body.
- **Offer fluids frequently** (preferably water, in addition to meals).
- **No baths or showers**, especially during fever spikes: sudden temperature changes can be poorly tolerated.
- If the fever persists, give **paracetamol** according to the child's weight.
- **Monitor the temperature regularly.**

Paracetamol: How to Use It?

Paracetamol (Doliprane, Efferalgan, etc.) can help temporarily lower the temperature but does not address the cause of the fever. It is available in the form of syrup or sachets to dissolve in water. Suppositories may be less effective due to variable absorption, even without diarrhea. The dosage depends on the child's weight. In general, you can administer paracetamol every **6 hours** (maximum of 4 doses per day). If the fever is moderate and the child tolerates it well (i.e., remains active and is not too uncomfortable), taking paracetamol is not essential.

When to Consult?

Consult immediately in the following situations:

- **Under 3 months:** go to the emergency room.
- **Chronic illness affecting immune defenses** (follow the recommendations of your child's doctor).
- **Very tired child**, not reacting well, or seems unusually lethargic.
- **Blue around the lips** (cyanosis), continuous moaning.
- **Unrelieved pain or intense crying**, significant discomfort, breathing difficulty, very frequent and liquid stools with difficulty hydrating.
- **Recent travel to a malaria-risk area** within the last 3 months.
In other cases, consult if the fever persists for more than **2 to 3 days**.

If concerned, contact **15** for advice on what to do.

