

Discharge Advice for Carers of Children Younger Than 5 Years Who Have a Fever

We think that your child is well enough to go home now, but if they get worse (more unwell) or have the following symptoms then you should contact a doctor:

- Your child becomes difficult to rouse, pale or floppy
- Your child is finding it hard to breathe or is grunting
- Your child has a fit or convulsion
- Your child develops a rash that does not disappear with pressure (see 'tumbler test' section)
- You are concerned your child is dehydrated (see section below)
- Your child has a high-pitched or continuous cry
- Your child has a stiff neck or bulging fontanelle (the soft spot on baby's head)
- Your child has a swollen joint or is not weight bearing
- The fever lasts 5 days or longer
- You are concerned that you are unable to look after your child at home

take them to your local Emergency Department as soon as possible or in an emergency dial 999 for an ambulance.

What to do when your child has a fever

- Offer your child regular drinks (if you are breastfeeding then breast milk is best)
- Check for signs of dehydration (dry mouth, no tears, sunken eyes, sunken fontanelle, drowsiness, reduced wet nappies)
- Check your child for rashes and know how to look for and identify a non-blanching rash as that could be a sign of serious illness (see 'tumbler test' section)
- Check on your child during the night
- Give medicines if your child is distressed or uncomfortable
- Keep your child away from school or nursery while they have a fever and notify them of your child's absence
- Return a urine sample if one has been requested, ideally within 24 hours

Fever and Medicines

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, or by sponging them with water.

Although it is not necessary to treat fever, there are two medicines that can be used to treat distress caused by fever and being unwell. These are ibuprofen and paracetamol and they may make your child feel better. They are equally effective, so you should start with one and only use the other if the first has not worked, but you should not give both at the same time.

Read the instructions carefully as these medicines come in different strengths, and they may also be contained in other products that your pharmacist sells. If you have any doubt you should tell the pharmacist what you are currently using. Although both are very safe when used correctly, they may be harmful if too large a dose is given or if given too often.

Rashes and the tumbler test



Photo courtesy of the Meningitis Research Foundation

Do the 'tumbler test' if your child has a rash. Press a glass tumbler firmly against the rash. If you can see the spots through the glass and they do not fade this is called a 'non-blanching rash'. If this rash is present seek medical advice immediately.

If the spots fade when the glass is rolled over them, the rash is probably not serious, but keep checking, it can develop into a rash that does not fade.

Rashes are harder to see on dark skin so look for rashes on paler areas, such as palms of the hands, soles of the feet, tummy and inside the eyelids.

If you are worried that your child's health is getting worse, seek further medical advice – do not wait for a rash to appear.

This information can be offered in other formats on request, including a language other than English and Braille.

RD&E (Eastern Services) main switchboard: 01392 411611 NDDH (Northern Services) main switchboard: 01271 322577

For Royal Devon services log on to: <https://royaldevon.nhs.uk>

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