

Your child has been examined by a doctor at the Erasmus Medical Centre – Sophia and you have received advice about your child's fever. It is important to keep a close eye on your child to check for any changes. This leaflet provides you with information about what to look out for. The front page of the leaflet provides information on how to care for your child at home. Inside the leaflet you will find more background information about fever. On the back of the leaflet there is more information about the symptoms to look for in your child and what you should do in if you see these symptoms in your child.

What can you do yourself?

Follow the advice below if your child has a fever. If your child is playing, drinking and passing urine as usual, this is a reassuring sign. However, this situation can change, so it is important to keep a close eye on your child. Please pay attention to the specific symptoms on the back of this leaflet and follow that advice.

- Offer your child plenty of drinks; offer frequent small amounts. Do not give your child fizzy drinks. You do not need to worry if your child does not want to eat for a few days.
- Do not over dress our child, but make sure that your child can lose heat easily.
- It is OK to let your child may do everything he or she wants, according to his/her level of energy. It is not necessary to keep your child in bed. Let your child recover calmly.
- If your child is in pain or feels unwell: give paracetamol according to the user instructions. (see also later in this leaflet).
- If your child has a cold: flush the nose a few times a day with saltwater solution, or use a nasal aspirator to clear the nose from mucus (both available at the pharmacy).
- If you discover a rash on your child's skin, do the glass test (see inside this leaflet)
- It can be useful to measure the temperature of your child daily as well as to monitor how much urine your child is passing.

Information video

You can watch the video *Koorts bij kinderen, tips en adviezen voor een goed herstel (in Dutch)*, containing the most important information about caring for your child with a fever. We recommend you first watch the video, then read the rest of this leaflet afterwards. You can find the video on www.sehzorg.nl/koortskinderen (in Dutch).

What is fever?

Fever is an increase in your child's body temperature above 38 degrees Celsius. This is a natural response of a body to infection. The temperature can rise to more than 40 degrees and can vary during the day or over several days. This is not related to the severity of the disease and is common in young children.

What is the cause?

The cause of fever is usually an infection. A child can also develop a fever after he or she receives a vaccination. Infections are mostly caused by a virus, for example a cold or the flu. However, sometimes an infection is caused by bacteria. In children the most common bacterial infections cause pneumonia and urinary tract infections. The most severe infections are meningitis and sepsis, but these infections are rare.

Pneumonia

In the case of pneumonia, the small airways and air sacs at the end of the airways are inflamed. This inflammation can be caused by a virus as well as by bacteria. Symptoms of a pneumonia are fever, coughing and shortness of breath and sometimes abdominal pain. In addition, there can be general complaints, like fatigue and eating or drinking less.

How do I know if my child has a fever?

If your child has a fever, he or she will feel warm to touch. Your child may be tired and feel unwell, or eating or drinking less than usual. Your child may also suffer from complaints like coughing, a sore throat, abdominal pain or a headache. You can measure the temperature of your child with a thermometer. This can be done with a rectal thermometer (via the buttocks). It can also be measured in the armpit or mouth or with an ear thermometer. However, these are less suitable for babies. Make sure you always measure the temperature in the same way. If the temperature is above 38 degrees Celsius, your child has a fever.

What is the treatment?

Paracetamol

Fever, in itself, is harmless and there is no need to lower the temperature. This also applies to fever over 40 degrees. Paracetamol does not prevent febrile seizures. If your child is in pain, feels unwell or distressed, paracetamol can be helpful. Give paracetamol at fixed times, according to the instructions on the medicine packet. See also the leaflet *Pijnstilling bij kinderen (in Dutch)*. Using paracetamol will not affect your child's recovery.

Antibiotics (on doctor's prescription)

Antibiotics may be needed in certain infections. It is important to know that treatment with antibiotics is not effective against viruses. Sometimes antibiotics are also not effective against bacterial infections. Whether your child needs antibiotics or not, must be evaluated by a doctor. If your child is given antibiotics, side effects may occur like skin rashes, vomiting or diarrhoea. If your child suffers from side effects, please contact your general practitioner.

Any questions?

If you have questions after reading this leaflet, please do not hesitate to contact your general practitioner or your child's doctor in the outpatient department.

More information

More information can be found on www.sehzorg.nl/koortskinderen or www.thuisarts.nl/koorts-bij-kinderen. Information for children can be found on: www.kindenziek.nl.

Glass test

Do the 'glass test' if your child is sick and has a rash. Push a glass firmly against the skin. When the rash remains visible through the glass, this can be a sign of a serious infection and therefore it is important to seek medical help quickly.



Febrile seizure

A febrile seizure may occur in children between three months and six years of age. The child's arms and legs will twitch and they will lose consciousness. It occurs in 1 in 20 children. Usually the attack stops within a few minutes. If your child has a febrile seizure, it is important to stay with your child and to ensure that he or she cannot injure him/herself. Call the emergency number if the seizure lasts longer than 5-10 minutes. Otherwise, call your general practitioner, who will refer you to a paediatrician if needed. Febrile seizures do not cause brain damage and no additional examination is needed for a regular febrile seizure.

Which symptoms to look for in your child?

If your child has a fever and...

- Does not respond, is very difficult to wake or is confused
- Appears blue, pale or grey
- Has breath stops or is grunting
- Is very short of breath or gasping
- Has an attack of twitching of arms and legs that does not stop

**Call the emergency
number**

- Develops a non-blanching rash (see glass test inside the leaflet)
- Is more difficult to wake
- His/her health gets worse within a few hours
- Is inconsolable
- Is short of breath or has fast and/or noisy breathing
- Is drinking much less than usual
- Is passing much less urine than usual
- Is vomiting continuously
- Has continuous diarrhoea
- Has pain when urinating
- Has a fever that lasts more than five days
- Acts differently, in a way that you become more worried

**Contact your
general
practitioner**

- Is drinking less, but passing urine regularly
- Is uncomfortable and tired, but playing
- Has no 'orange' or 'red' symptoms as described above
- Is coughing, but is not short of breath
- Is crying more, but can be comforted

**Follow the advice
inside this leaflet**