

FACT VS. FICTION

- **Fiction:** All fevers are harmful for children. **Fact:** A fever is induced through the body's own immune system and serves to help fight against infection.
- **Fiction:** Fever itself can cause brain damage or fevers above 104°F are dangerous. **Fact:** Temperatures above 108°F can potentially cause brain damage. Temperatures in this range are seen primarily due to high environmental temperatures (i.e., confined to hot, enclosed vehicle)
- **Fiction:** All fevers should be treated with fever-reducing medicine. **Fact:** Fever should be treated if the child experiences discomfort (i.e., usually around 102°-103°F)
- **Fiction:** If the temperature doesn't return to normal (i.e., fever doesn't "break") after treatment, the cause of fever must be serious. **Fact:** Unresponsive fevers can be caused by virus or bacteria and do not correlate with the seriousness of disease.



REFERENCES

- MedlinePlus Website. <http://www.nlm.nih.gov>. Accessed February 11, 2008.
- Children's Hospital San Diego Website. <http://www.chsd.org>. Accessed February 11, 2008.
- Better Health Website. <http://www.betterhealth.vic.gov>. Accessed February 11, 2008.
- Mayoral CE, Marino RV, Rosenfeld W, Greensher J. Alternating antipyretics: is this an alternative. *Pediatrics*. 2000;105(5):1009-1012.

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FEVER

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WHAT IS A FEVER?

A fever occurs when the body's temperature is higher than normal. Fever activates the body's immune system and serves as one of the body's protective mechanisms against foreign viruses or bacteria. A fever is usually considered to be 100.4°F or greater.



COMMON CAUSES OF FEVER

- Viral Infections
- Bacterial Infections
- Colds or Flu-like illnesses
- Certain Medications
- Inflammatory diseases
- Overdressed children in hot environments
- Parasitic infections

FEVER MANAGEMENT

- Dress your child in lightweight, and comfortable clothing.
- Proper hydration should be maintained with cool, clear liquids as tolerated.
- Do NOT use cold baths or alcohol rubs, as this will cool the skin too quickly causing the child to shiver. Shivering will raise the core body temperature.
- You may sparingly use a lukewarm sponge or washcloth after fever-reducing medications are given. If shivering develops, this practice should be discontinued.
- Proper use of over-the-counter (OTC) fever reducing medications (i.e., acetaminophen and ibuprofen).

- Aspirin is NOT recommended.

OTC MEDICATIONS

- Tylenol (acetaminophen)
 - Works by tuning down the body's own "thermostat".
 - Available as suspension, elixir, suppository, tablet, capsule, chewable tablet, and meltaway (disintegrating) tablet.
- Motrin (ibuprofen)
 - Helps fight the fever at its inflammatory source
 - Not recommended in children under 6 months.
 - Available as suspension, elixir, tablet, capsule, and chewable tablet.
- Always check instructions on the package. If you are unsure, ask your child's pediatrician or local pharmacist for accurate dosing instructions.
- There is currently no robust scientific basis to support the practice of alternating Tylenol and Motrin products. The American Academy of Pediatrics does not provide a policy or recommendation for this practice.