

Following discharge from the ward if you are concerned:

Telephone:

Safari Day Unit, Lincoln	01522 573172
Rainforest Ward, Lincoln	01522 573786
Children's Ward, Boston	01205 445563

Or contact your GP or your hospital Accident and Emergency department.

References

If you require a full list of references for this leaflet please email patient.information@ulh.nhs.uk

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Excellence in rural healthcare



High temperature (fever) in children

Discharge Advice

Children's Services

Lincoln County Hospital
Pilgrim Hospital, Boston
Grantham and District Hospital

www.ulh.nhs.uk

Aim of the leaflet

This leaflet aims to provide parents with advice on managing a child with a high temperature.

What causes high temperatures?

- **Viral infections** are the common cause. Viral infections cause many common illnesses such as colds, coughs, flu, diarrhoea, etc. Sometimes viral infections cause more serious illnesses.
- **Bacterial infections** are less common than viral infections, but also cause high temperatures. Bacteria are more likely to cause serious illness such as pneumonia and meningitis.
- **Other types of infection** are uncommon causes of a high temperature in the UK.

What should I do?

- **If your child is in discomfort with the high temperature you can give paracetamol or ibuprofen.** You can buy these in liquid form for children. They come in various brand names. Do not give paracetamol and ibuprofen at the same time.
- **Take the clothes off the child** if the room is normal 'room temperature'. IT IS WRONG TO WRAP UP A FEVERISH CHILD.
- **Give lots of cool drinks.** This helps to lower the temperature and prevents dehydration. Signs of dehydration include a dry mouth, no tears, sunken eyes, drowsiness and becoming generally unwell.
- Do not 'cold-sponge' a child who has a high temperature. This used to be popular, but it is now not advised. This is

because the blood vessels under the skin may become narrower (constrict) if the water is too cold. This reduces the heat lost from the body and can trap heat in deeper parts of the body. The child may then get worse. Many children also find cold-sponging uncomfortable.

- **Cold fans** are not recommended although cooling an over warm room with adequate ventilation is sensible.
- Check your child during the night.

What should I look out for?

If your baby is under 3 months of age and has a temperature of 38C and above seek medical advice.

If your baby is 3 to 6 months of age and has a temperature of 39C and above seek medical advice.

A child with a high temperature may look quite unwell. He or she may be flushed and irritable. However, most bouts of high temperature are not caused by serious illness and the temperature often comes down quickly. It is quite common to see a child happily playing an hour or so later when their temperature has come down. They will not be entirely back to normal, but it is reassuring if a child improves with the drop in temperature.

As a rule, a child with a serious infection will usually become worse and more ill, despite efforts to bring their temperature down. In addition, they may have other worrying symptoms. For example, breathing problems, drowsiness, convulsions, pains or headaches which become worse despite paracetamol or ibuprofen. Seek medical advice if:

- Your child has a fit.
- Your child develops a non blanching rash.
- Your child becomes more unwell and you are worried.
- The fever lasts for more than 5 days.