



ADVICE FOR CAREGIVERS ON MANAGING YOUR CHILD'S FEVER

This sheet gives you advice on what to do if your child has a fever, particularly around when and how to use paracetamol and ibuprofen. Usually a fever is caused by common infections which are not serious but sometimes a fever can mean that your child has a serious illness.

What do I do if my child has a fever?

- Take their temperature
- Dress your child normally - children with fever should not be under dressed or over wrapped
- Do not use a cool cloth or sponge to get their temperature down
- Use either paracetamol or ibuprofen if they are upset or distressed. The only purpose for treating fever in children must be to relieve the child's discomfort and not to lower the body temperature.

Can I give my child paracetamol and / or ibuprofen if they are already on an antibiotic?

Yes.

Will paracetamol and ibuprofen stop febrile convulsions (fever fit)?

No. They will not prevent febrile convulsions and you should not use them specifically for this purpose.

When using paracetamol or ibuprofen in children with fever

Start by giving your child either paracetamol **or** ibuprofen. Continue the medication only as long as the child appears distressed. Consider changing to the other agent if the child's distress is not alleviated. **Do not give both agents at the same time. Only consider alternating these agents if the distress persists or recurs before the next dose is due.**

Example: If you give your child paracetamol to start with and after an hour their temperature is still high and they are still distressed, try giving them ibuprofen, then paracetamol the next time, then ibuprofen the next time and so on.

Give your child up to four doses of paracetamol over 24 hours and / or up to three doses of ibuprofen over 24 hours if required. **Do not give more than this.**

Leave 4 to 6 hours between **each** dose of paracetamol and 6 to 8 hours between **each** dose of ibuprofen.

Your doctor may decide that it is better to give your child paracetamol and / or ibuprofen based on their current weight rather than their age; if so they will complete the section below. Otherwise, follow the dosing directions on the product packaging.

Additional advice when caring for a child at home

- Offer the child regular fluids (in children who are breastfed, the most appropriate fluid is breast milk).
- To detect signs of dehydration observe the child/ baby for the following:
 - ~ The soft spot on a baby's head may curve inwards (is sunken)
 - ~ Dry mouth
 - ~ Eyes appear sunken
 - ~ There are no tears when the child cries
 - ~ The child looks unwell
- Encourage the child to drink more fluids and consider seeking further advice if you detect signs of dehydration
- Check the child during the night
- Children with fever should avoid nursery/school while the child's fever persists and the nursery/school should be notified of the illness. Further advice is available [here](#).
- Advice in relation to return to school following a temperature in children during the COVID-19 pandemic is available [here](#).

When to seek further help

If looking after a feverish child at home seek further advice if

- the child has a fit
- the child develops a non-blanching rash (press a clear glass firmly to the skin and the rash will not disappear) , is bothered by light or has a stiff neck.
- the parent or carer feels that the child is less well than when they previously sought advice
- the parent or carer is more worried than when they previously sought advice
- the fever lasts 5 days or longer
- the child is drowsy or hard to wake
- the child finds it hard to breathe and sucks their stomach in under their ribs
- the child has pale, blotchy blue or grey skin
- the child has a weak, high-pitched cry that is not their usual cry
- the parent or carer is distressed, or concerned that they the child requires further care.

Give _____ (name of child) current weight of _____ kgs on ____ / ____ / ____ [date]

- The dose of paracetamol ____ mg/5ml is ____ ml and this can be given every 4–6 hours (**no more than 4** times in 24 hours)
- The dose of ibuprofen ____ mg/5ml is ____ ml and this can be given every 6–8 hours (**no more than 3** times in 24 hours)

Please note that these doses may be different to the age-based dosing information on the product packaging.



ANTIPYRETIC MEDICINE CHART FOR CAREGIVERS

Keep track of when you give your child their medicines (paracetamol and / or ibuprofen and antibiotics)

The chart overleaf helps you keep track of the amount of paracetamol, ibuprofen and antibiotic (if they are taking one) you are giving your child and when. **Paracetamol and ibuprofen should not be given at the same time** but they can be alternated if the child's distress is not being relieved by one drug.

- Do not give paracetamol to a child under 2 months (unless your doctor prescribes otherwise)
- Do not give ibuprofen to a child under 3 months or under 5kg (unless your doctor prescribes otherwise)

Tick the box across from the time you give the various doses (amounts of medicine) to your child.

| | PARACETAMOL 4–6 hourly only if required (No more than 4 doses in 24 hrs) | IBUPROFEN 6–8 hourly only if required (No more than 3 doses in 24 hrs) | ANTIBIOTIC (Take as directed) |
|--------------------|--|--|----------------------------------|
| Dose | | | |
| 6am in the morning | | | |
| 7am | | | |
| 8am | | | |
| 9am | | | |
| 10am | | | |
| 11am | | | |
| 12 midday | | | |
| 1pm | | | |
| 2pm | | | |
| 3pm | | | |
| 4pm | | | |
| 5pm | | | |
| 6pm | | | |
| 7pm | | | |
| 8pm | | | |
| 9pm | | | |
| 10pm | | | |
| 11pm | | | |
| 12 midnight | | | |
| 1am | | | |
| 2am | | | |
| 3am | | | |
| 4am | | | |
| 5am | | | |