

# A Resourceful Guide in Caring for Children This Viral Season

We are seeing a spike in respiratory viruses, including colds, influenza, RSV (respiratory syncytial virus) and COVID-19. These can often be managed at home with over-the-counter medication. This guide is to help you care for an unwell child and to provide advice when to seek medical care.

## WHEN AND WHERE TO SEEK HELP

### Call 911 or go the Emergency Department when:

- You are worried your child is seriously ill
- Your infant, younger than 3 months old, has a fever
- Your child is struggling to breathe, such as sucking in between the ribs, above the breastbone or flaring of the nostrils
- You are concerned your child may be dehydrated (refusing to drink, no pee for 12 or more hours)



### See your family doctor or a walk-clinic when:

- A fever lasts greater than 3 days
- Persistent cough that does not seem to be going away
- A fever goes away for a day or longer (without fever medication) and comes back
- An earache that lasts greater than 2 days
- You are concerned about your child's eating and drinking; realizing it is normal to eat less when your child is sick



### Additional Care Options

**Health Connect Ontario:** For help in finding a family doctor or to chat with a nurse online or by phone. Dial 811 or visit [healthconnectontario.health.gov.on.ca](https://healthconnectontario.health.gov.on.ca).

**Family Doctors or Walk-in Clinics:** Visit [missississaugaahaltontionhealthline.ca](https://missississaugaahaltontionhealthline.ca) or [centralwesthealthline.ca](https://centralwesthealthline.ca).

**Covid, Cough, Cold and Flu Clinics:** For mild or moderate symptoms, book an appointment at [moht.ca](https://moht.ca) or [centralwestoht.ca](https://centralwestoht.ca).



### Caring for your sick child

- **Fever:** Treat fever or pain with over-the-counter medications such as Tylenol (acetaminophen) or Advil (ibuprofen) as directed. See additional info below.
- **Stuffy Nose:** Try saline drops or rinsing sprays, a humidifier or nasal aspirator (little babies)
- **Cough:** Treat cough with a humidifier or steam from the shower. For a barking cough, cool outside air may help. Cough medicine is not recommended for children under the age of 6-years-old. If your child is older than one, 1 to 2 teaspoons of honey may help. Honey should never be given to babies less than 12-months due to risk of botulism.
- **Fluids:** Make sure your child gets enough fluids. Breastmilk/formula is enough for babies who do not drink other fluids. In older children, avoid water alone. Popsicles, soups, water and Pedialyte are good options.

### How you can help prevent illness:

- Wear a mask in crowded indoor spaces
- Wash your hands often with soap and water; if not available use hand sanitizer
- Stay home when you are sick or if you can't wear a mask
- Cough and sneeze into your elbow
- Get your influenza and COVID vaccines

# FEVERS

## What is a Fever?

A fever can be a sign that the body is fighting an infection. When the body's defence system is activated by a germ (virus or bacteria), many symptoms can occur and fever is one. Fevers are common in young, healthy children. In general, a fever is not harmful and can be managed at home. A high fever does not mean the child is sicker. A child who appears well, but has a high fever is less worrisome than a child who has a mild fever, but appears unwell and is less responsive.

**A temperature of 38°C (100.4°F) or higher is a fever.**

| Age                   | Recommended Method                    |                          |
|-----------------------|---------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Newborn - 2 years old | Most accurate: Rectal (in the bottom) | Alternative: Armpit      |
| 2-5 years old         | Most accurate: Rectal                 | Alternative: Ear, Armpit |
| Older than 5 years    | Most accurate: Mouth                  | Alternative: Ear, Armpit |

Simple digital thermometers are best for measuring rectal, armpit and mouth temperatures. Ear thermometers are not accurate in very young children. Do not use forehead or pacifier thermometers because they are not reliable at any age. Visit the resource below for more information on measuring your child's temperature: <https://www.aboutkidshealth.ca/article?contentid=30&language=english>

## Managing a Fever

- Clothing should be light or one layer
- Offer extra fluids
- Avoid sponging. It does not lower a fever and may cool the child's outside body making them feel uncomfortable.
- Offer medication such as acetaminophen (Tylenol) or ibuprofen (Advil/Motrin), which can be taken together or a few hours apart if needed. Do not use ASA (Aspirin) to treat fever. Store brands work just as well as brand name medications.
- For children 3 to 6 months of age, use acetaminophen only. Children over 6 months of age can have acetaminophen and/or ibuprofen, and they can be rotated as needed.



# MEDICATION DOSING

The correct dose for a child is based on body weight and concentration. Check the bottle and read the package carefully. It is best to use a paediatric measuring cup, measuring spoon or oral syringe to give liquid medications to children. If a recommended product is unavailable, or if you are unsure, speak to your pharmacist to select an available product and confirm the right amount of medication to give.

**ACETAMINOPHEN:** Child's Weight (kg) \_\_\_\_\_ Child's Dose (mg) \_\_\_\_\_

| DOSE                                    | INSTRUCTIONS (mL)                            | INSTRUCTIONS (mg)                    |
|---|--|--------------------------------------|
| <b>15 mg/kg every 4 hours as needed</b> | Give ___ mL of 80 mg/mL infant drops         | Give ___ tablets of 80 mg tablet(s)  |
|   | Give ___ mL of 160 mg/5 mL children's liquid | Give ___ tablets of 325 mg tablet(s) |
|   |  | Give ___ tablets of 500 mg tablet(s) |

**IBUPROFEN:** Child's Weight (kg) \_\_\_\_\_ Child's Dose (mg) \_\_\_\_\_

| DOSE   | INSTRUCTIONS (mL)                            | INSTRUCTIONS (mg)                    |
|--|--|--------------------------------------|
| <b>6 months and over: 10 mg/kg as needed every 6 hours</b> | Give ___ mL of 200 mg/5 mL infant drops      | Give ___ tablets of 100 mg tablet(s) |
|  | Give ___ mL of 100 mg/5 mL children's liquid | Give ___ tablets of 200 mg tablet(s) |
|  |  | Give ___ tablets of 400 mg tablet(s) |

## What if I Cannot Find Medication?

If infant or children's medication is not available, caregivers can consider splitting and/or crushing adult tablets and mixing with small amounts of juice, applesauce or pudding. **Do not use extended-release (long acting) tablets.**

## ACETAMINOPHEN (TYLENOL)

Adult tablets that can be used are REGULAR 325 mg tablets or EXTRA STRENGTH 500 mg tablets. **Do not use extended release forms or Acetaminophen Arthritis Relief products.** Check with your pharmacist for assistance if needed. Doses can be given every 4 hours, for a maximum of 5 times a day.

| Age             | Weight                     | Usual Dose | Suggested oral tablet option                               |
|-----------------|----------------------------|------------|--|
| 4-11 mo         | 12-17 lbs (5.4-8.1 kg)     | 80 mg      | 81.25 mg (1/4 of 325 mg tab)                               |
| 1-2 yr          | 18-23 lbs (8.2-10.8 kg)    | 120 mg     | 125 mg (1/4 of 500 mg tab) OR 81.25 mg for cautions dosing |
| 2-3 yr          | 24-35 lbs (10.9-16.3 kg)   | 160 mg     | 162.5 mg (1/2 of 325 mg tab)                               |
| 4-5 yr          | 36-47 lbs (16.4-21.7 kg)   | 240 mg     | 250 mg (1/2 of 500 mg tab) OR 243 mg (3/4 of 325 mg tab)   |
| 6-10 yr         | 48-71 lbs (21.8-32.6 kg)   | 320-400 mg | 325 mg tab   |
| 11 yr and older | 72 lb (32.7 kg) and higher | 480-500 mg | 500 mg tab   |

## IBUPROFEN (ADVIL/MOTRIN)

Adult tablets come in 200 mg, 300 mg, and 400 mg. **Do not give extended-release forms or gel-capsules.** Check with your pharmacist for assistance if needed. Doses can be given every 6 to 8 hours as needed.

| Age             | Weight                     | Usual Dose | Suggested oral tablet option                           |
|-----------------|----------------------------|------------|--|
| 6-11 mo         | 12-17 lbs (5.4-8.1 kg)     | 50 mg      | 50 mg (1/4 of 200 mg tab)                              |
| 1-2 yr          | 18-23 lbs (8.2-10.8 kg)    | 75-80 mg   | 75 mg (1/4 of 300 mg tab) OR 50 mg for cautions dosing |
| 2-3 yr          | 24-35 lbs (10.9-16.3 kg)   | 100 mg     | 100 mg (1/2 of 200 mg tab)                             |
| 4-5 yr          | 36-47 lbs (16.4-21.7 kg)   | 150 mg     | 150 mg (1/2 of 300 mg tab OR 3/4 of 200 mg tab)        |
| 6-10 yr         | 48-71 lbs (21.8-32.6 kg)   | 200-250 mg | 200 mg tab   |
| 11 yr and older | 72 lb (32.7 kg) and higher | 300 mg     | 300 mg tab OR 300 mg (1 and 1/2 of 200 mg tab)         |

For more information, visit our website by scanning the QR code.

