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# Fever and Children

家庭醫學及  
基層醫療中心

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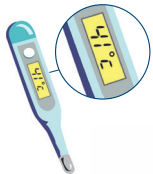
## What Causes Fever?

Fever is a symptom, not an illness. It is a natural defense of the body's immune system against infection.

## Frequently Asked Questions

### Is it true that the higher the body temperature, the more serious the illness?

No. The values of the body temperature may not be in direct proportion to the severity of illness. But high temperature ( $>41^{\circ}\text{C}$ ) may be in itself a serious condition. Seek medical help immediately.



### Will fever cause brain damage?

The actual cause of brain damage is encephalitis or meningitis; and fever is one of the symptoms. Unless the temperatures go over  $41^{\circ}\text{C}$ , there would be minimal brain damage.

### Will fever cause seizures?

The seizure caused by a fever is called febrile seizure. Febrile seizures are common in children between the ages of 1 and 2, triggered by a rise of body temperature over  $38^{\circ}\text{C}$ . Statistics show that 50% of cases are hereditary and others of unknown causes. However, the great majority of children do not have febrile seizures.

### What to do when my child has a febrile seizure?

When it happens, parents must stay calm. Lay the child down on one side to avoid obstruction of the airway. Remove any object that may injure him. Seek medical help immediately. DO NOT try to stop the seizure movements, as this may cause fractures. DO NOT try to force anything into his mouth, as this increases the risk of injury to the teeth or jawbone. The broken tooth may obstruct the airway and lead to suffocation.



## Home Care for Fever

1. Remove excess clothing or blankets.
2. Open the window and keep the room well-ventilated. The environment should be comfortably cool by using electric fan or air-conditioner.
3. Bathe or sponge the child in lukewarm water to help cool down the fever. (Remember: DO NOT use alcohol rubs)
4. Have the child take rest and drink a lot of water.
5. Have the child take the prescribed medication to reduce fever. However, the effect is temporary and the body temperature may bounce back up, until the illness is treated and the body temperature will then return to normal.

## Seek Medical Help Immediately

1. If the child is sluggish and weak, showing signs of irritability, confusion, loss of appetite, inactivity, continuous vomiting and diarrhea.
2. If the fever exceeds  $40^{\circ}\text{C}$  and the child is lethargic.
3. If the child has symptoms of dehydration, such as dry and chapped lips, poor skin turgor and sunken eyes.