



Understanding and Treating Fever in Children

You've probably been there: your kiddo's temperature spikes, and you're left with worry about the cause and uncertainty about what to do. At these times, many parents experience fever phobia. It's best described as an irrational and intense fear amongst caregivers and parents when a child runs a fever.

Studies show that it's common worldwide, regardless of socio-economic or educational backgrounds. Fever phobia can significantly influence the treatment decisions of parents or caregivers, not always in the best way.

Definition of Fever

Fever is the body's natural defensive response to infections or illnesses. In children, a temperature of 100.4°F (38°C) and above typically indicates a fever. Common causes include viral or bacterial infections, immunizations, and even sunburn. A temperature below 102°F is considered low-grade.

Treatment

Light clothing, sponge baths with tepid water, and keeping the room cool can help your child stay comfortable. Vegetable soup isn't just delicious- it can provide relief too.

Don't forget about the 2 Rs—rest and rehydration. Fluids replace what the body loses in sweat, while slumber gives the body time to heal.

Acetaminophen and ibuprofen can reduce discomfort and manage the fever. However, be sure to follow the recommended dosages based on your child's age and weight. Stick to the one that seems to work best and avoid alternating these unless your pediatrician advises to do so.

Medical intervention becomes necessary with persistent high-grade fever lasting more than two days, or any fever lasting 6 days or more without a known cause. Other reasons to seek medical care include symptoms that suggest a bacterial infection like strep throat or an ear infection. Consider visiting an urgent care center or ER for more serious symptoms including a severe cough or difficulty breathing, symptoms of dehydration, or a noteworthy change in your child's behavior such as confusion, being too sleepy (lethargy) or crying nonstop in an infant (irritability). Additionally, if your gut instinct is ringing the alarm bells—listen! When in doubt, reach out to a healthcare professional.

Summary

Fevers are common in children and are usually not harmful. Medication isn't always necessary for mild fevers. Comforting measures and plenty of fluids are often all that is needed. Seek medical help when necessary, but don't panic; it's not always a sign of calamity. If you're uncertain, consult with a healthcare professional.



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Bonus Soup Recipe

When I'm under the weather, I like to make this super simple and fast miso soup. You only need a few ingredients and about 10 minutes. Miso is a Japanese fermented soybean paste that can be found in most grocery stores these days. If you have a choice, go with the white miso, which has the mildest flavor. Miso is especially healthy because it contains beneficial probiotic bacteria which keep your gut happy and promote a robust immune system to fight off illness. Be sure to add the miso at the end, when the water is no longer boiling to avoid killing off these good bacteria.

Ingredients

- 1 package of ramen noodles (discard the seasoning packets, we're just using the noodles)
- 1 small baby bok choy, cut into 1-inch pieces on the diagonal (kale or spinach also work well)
- 3-4 mushrooms, sliced
- ¼ cup shredded carrots
- Any other veggies you like in soup (this is your comfort food – do what makes you happy!)
- 1 tsp low sodium soy sauce or Tamari
- 1 Tbs white miso paste
- Optional red pepper flakes, shredded nori seaweed, toasted sesame seeds, etc.

Instructions

- Add everything except the miso paste to your favorite soup bowl and add enough boiling water to cover.
- Let sit for 5 minutes or until the noodles are soft.
- Mix in the miso paste and stir until dissolved.
- Enjoy!