

# High temperature and fever in babies and children

A high temperature is the **body's natural response** to fighting infections like coughs and colds.

Normal temperature usually ranges between **36.5 to 37.5 degrees Celsius**

Calpol should only be **administered as directed** on the manufacturer's dosage guidance, unless advised by your doctor.

## What is a fever?

A fever is a raised body temperature of over 37.5°C. A high temperature is the body's natural response to fighting infections like coughs and colds.

## How to take your child temperature

There are two main options when taking a child's temperature.

- **Under arm:** For children under the age of five, taking their temperature under the armpit gives the most accurate reading.
- **Ear:** A temperature reading taken from the ear can be quicker. Take care to get an accurate reading, as babies' ears are naturally smaller than adults', so it can be hard to get the thermometer into the correct position.

## What to do if your child has a high temperature:

### Do's

- ✓ Give them plenty of fluids
- ✓ Look out for signs of dehydration
- ✓ Give them food if they want it
- ✓ Check on your child regularly during the night
- ✓ Keep them at home
- ✓ Give them paracetamol if they are distressed or unwell
- ✓ Get medical advice if you are worried about your child

### Don'ts

- ✗ Do not undress your child or sponge them down to cool them
- ✗ Do not cover them up in too many clothes or bedclothes
- ✗ Do not give aspirin to under 16s
- ✗ Do not combine ibuprofen and paracetamol, unless a GP tell you to
- ✗ Do not give paracetamol to a child under 2 months
- ✗ Do not give ibuprofen to a child under 3 months or under 5kg
- ✗ Do not give ibuprofen to children with asthma

## When should I seek medical help?

There are two main options when taking a child's temperature.

- Speak to your child's GP if your child's health gets worse.

### Get medical help if you notice any of the following

- Vomiting
- Skin colour (pale or mottled)
- Changes in breathing
- Rash
- Stiff neck

A fever will often pass with care at home,  
but see your doctor if your baby is:

**Under three months old**  
and has a temperature of  
**38°C or higher**

**Under six months old**  
and has a temperature  
of **39°C or higher**

**Sourced from:**

<https://www.calpol.co.uk/illnesses-symptoms/fever-high-temperature>

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/fever-in-children/>