

When is a fever **cause for alarm?**

Fevers are not always dangerous.

A fever is an increase in your normal body temperature, a result of your brain reacting to your body's response to an illness, an infection or some other cause.

There are a few variances on what determines if a person has a fever, including, most important, age.

ADULTS:

98.6 degrees Fahrenheit (F) is considered normal body temperature.

BABIES:

A body temperature above 100.9 F is considered a fever.

CHILDREN (2-18):

A body temperature above 100.4 F is considered a fever.

Infants and young children

have a higher average body temperature than older children and adults. That's because their metabolism is more active, and the surface area of their bodies is larger relative to their weight. For example, a newborn's average body temperature is 99.5 F.



When to **contact a doctor**

You can treat a fever with over-the-counter fever reducers. However, **doctors have established guidelines** to help you determine when to seek medical treatment for a fever.

INFANTS

For a child between birth to 24 months, call your pediatrician if your child is:

- **Birth to three months old**
and has a rectal temperature of 100.4 F or higher
- **Three to six months old**
and has a rectal temperature up to 102 F and appears oddly irritable, lethargic or uncomfortable, or has a temperature higher than 102 F
- **Six to 24 months old**
with a rectal temperature higher than 102 F that lasts longer than one day but has no other symptoms. If this child has other symptoms, such as cough, cold or diarrhea, consider calling the child's doctor.

If your child has special health concerns, such as immune system problems or pre-existing illnesses, ask your child's doctor for guidance.

99.5°F

The average
body temperature
of a newborn

>100.4°F

above average
from birth to
three months





CHILDREN

For children ranging in age from two years to teenaged, a temperature of 102 F isn't always a reason to be alarmed if they are responsive, drinking plenty of fluids and active.

However, call your child's doctor if the child:

- Appears listless or irritable, vomits repeatedly, has a bad headache or stomachache, or has other symptoms that cause significant discomfort
- Has a fever after being left in a hot car. In this case, seek medical care immediately.
- Has a fever that lasts longer than three days
- Appears listless and has trouble making eye contact with you

If you or someone you care for is experiencing a fever, drink plenty of fluids, rest your body and dress to stay cool.

And never hesitate to reach out to a doctor for advice and care.

ADULTS

We've all been taught that our "normal" body temperature is 98.6 degrees F. But for many adults, that baseline can vary due to several factors:

- Your body's response to environmental conditions
- If you have been physically active
- The time of day

Your temperature is probably lower when you first wake up than it is in the afternoon or evening. To determine your body's baseline temperature, check your temperature (when you are not sick) six or seven times over the course of a couple of days and note the average of those results.

If your temperature is 103 F or higher, call your doctor. If your fever is accompanied by any of the following, seek medical care as soon as possible:

- Severe headache
- Unusual skin rash (especially if the rash quickly worsens)
- Unusual sensitivity to bright light
- Stiff neck and pain when you bend your head forward
- Confusion
- Persistent vomiting
- Difficulty breathing or chest pain
- Abdominal pain or pain when urinating
- Convulsions or seizures

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