

# Fever in Children under 5 years old

## Child Health Information

### Advice after discharge home from hospital

Following assessment we think that your child is well enough to go home now. If you become more worried or if you are concerned that your child has become more unwell please seek further advice.

- **If you have concerns during the 24 hours after you have been sent home please call the RUH children's ward on 01225 824421.**
- **After 24 hours please call your GP surgery or NHS111 for advice. If your child's fever continues for more than 5 days please see your GP.**
- **If you are very worried call 999 for an ambulance.**

### What to do when your child has a fever

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- Offer your child regular drinks (if you are breastfeeding then breast milk is best)
- Check for signs that your child may be dehydrated (dry mouth, no tears, sunken eyes, sunken fontanelle – the soft spot on a baby's head). If you notice any of these signs seek further advice (see section above).
- Check your child for rashes and know how to look for and identify a non-blanching rash (a rash that does not disappear with pressure) as that could be a sign of serious illness (see 'tumbler test' section)
- Check on your child during the night
- Do not try to reduce your child's fever with medicine, but do use medicines (see medicines section) if your child is distressed or uncomfortable
- Keep your child away from school or nursery while they have a fever

### Fever and Medicines

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Fever is a natural and healthy response to infection, so do not try to reduce your child's fever by using fans or by sponging them with water.

Although it is not necessary to treat fever it can make your child feel uncomfortable and unsettled. There are two medicines that can be used to treat distress caused by fever and being unwell. These medicines are ibuprofen (eg Neurofen<sup>®</sup>) and paracetamol (eg Calpol<sup>®</sup>) which can

both make your child feel better. They are equally effective, so you should start with one and only use the other if the first has not worked, but you should not give both at the same time. Read the instructions carefully as these medicines come in different strengths, and they may also be contained in other products that your pharmacist sells.

## Rashes and the tumbler test

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- If your child has a rash do the 'tumbler test' (also called the glass test). Press a glass tumbler firmly against the rash.
- If you can see the spots through the glass and they do not fade this is called a 'non-blanching rash'. **If this rash is present seek medical advice immediately.**
- Rashes are harder to see on dark skin so look for rashes on paler areas, such as palms of the hands, soles of the feet, tummy and inside the eyelids.
- If you are worried that your child's health is getting worse, seek further medical advice – do not wait for a rash to appear.

Photograph of a tumbler test showing a 'non-blanching' rash:



Photo courtesy of the Meningitis Research Foundation

This leaflet is based on NICE guideline CG160 'Feverish illness in Children'