

## FEVER in Children and Youth

Fever in a child can result from a variety of causes such as:

- Overheating (e.g. running around during recess in hot weather)
- Reaction to a medication or vaccine
- A viral, bacterial, or parasitic infection
- Other noninfectious illnesses such as rheumatoid arthritis or malignancy)

A child with a fever:

- may not appear ill
- may simply appear flushed
- or may appear sick with fatigue, irritability, and decreased activity.

Fever alone is not harmful (except prolonged fevers above 106° F) and is part of the body's normal defense mechanisms. Fever may be a sign of the body fighting infection. A fever may be associated with an infection that is contagious (e.g. Strep throat) or that is not contagious (e.g. a urinary tract infection). Fever is not a good indication of severity of illness.

Students with fever (100° F) in school need observation and an initial evaluation. Sometimes a student only requires a 15-20 min. rest to become fever-free. **In most cases, the parent will be called and the student sent home for further evaluation by parents and, possibly, the child's health care provider.**

**Children may not return to school with a fever** except in rare circumstances (as with a rheumatoid disease) and with a physician's note.

- Children may not return to school if they are sick or not feeling well.
- Children who are not able to fully participate in the classroom because they don't feel well should not be in school.
- Children who have or may have a contagious viral illness (e.g. chicken pox or measles) may not be school.
- Children who are started on an antibiotic for a potentially contagious bacterial infection (e.g. Strep throat) may not return to school until they have been on the antibiotic for 24 hours.

### TIPS:

- Children with fever need adequate hydration. Offer them lots of water.
- Children may need antipyretics (e.g. Tylenol or Advil) if they are very uncomfortable with fever and as suggested by their health providers.
- Parents should not give antipyretics (e.g. Tylenol, Advil, Ibuprofen, acetaminophen) to a child with fever and discomfort and then send the child to school. That child should not be in school.
- A baby less than 3 months old with a fever must be seen by a doctor.
- Parents should consult with the child's doctor when the child has a fever longer than 24 hours **or** fever plus:
  - Headache
  - Neck ache
  - Difficulty breathing
  - Pain on urination
  - Abdominal pain
  - Vomiting or diarrhea
  - Decreased responsiveness
  - Decreased activity
  - Rash
  - Seizure
  - Redness, swelling, or pain on any part of the body