

Fever

Do I need an appointment?

Most people who have a fever **do not** need a medical appointment. Usually, a fever gets better on its own and does not need treatment. Fevers are usually caused by infection which in most cases is not serious and gets better on its own.

What is a fever?

A fever is a rise in body temperature that goes above a certain level. In general, a fever means a temperature above 100.4°F (38°C). You might get slightly different numbers depending on how you take your temperature – oral (mouth), armpit, ear, forehead, or rectal. Please take your temperatures and write them down as you may be asked for these if you do call us.

What is the best way to take my temperature?

Armpit, ear, and forehead temperatures are easier to measure than rectal or oral temperatures, but they are not as accurate. For children under 4 years old rectal temperatures are much more accurate than oral temperatures.

Here is the right way to take an oral temperature:

- Wait at least 30 minutes after you eat or drink anything hot or cold
- Wash the thermometer with cool water and soap. Then rinse it.
- Place the tip of the thermometer under your tongue toward the back. Hold the thermometer with your lips, not your teeth.
- Keep your lips closed around the thermometer. A glass thermometer takes about 3 minutes to work. Most digital thermometers take less than 1 minute.

The height of the temperature is less important than **how sick you feel**.

When to Call the WCFHT

Most people with a fever recover without medical care. However, if you or a person you care for have any of the following signs or symptoms, call us for advice.

- Are pregnant
- Recently travelled to Africa, Asia, Latin America, or the Middle East
- Just got out of the hospital, had surgery or another medical procedure
- Take medicines that suppress the immune system – (ie steroids and medicines used to prevent rejection after organ transplant)
- You have a serious health condition, such as diabetes, heart disease, cancer, lupus, or sickle cell anemia.
- Get infections often
- Your fever lasts several days or keeps coming back
- You think you were recently bitten by a tick

You have a fever plus 1 or more of these symptoms:

- Rash
- Trouble breathing
- Severe headache or neck pain
- Seizure or confusion
- Severe vomiting or diarrhea
- Severe pain in the belly, back, or sides
- Any other symptom that is unusual or worries you



For Children:

- Younger than 3 months, and have a rectal temperature of 100.4°F (38°C) or higher.
- Between 3 and 36 months, and have a rectal temperature of 100.4°F (38°C) or higher for more than 3 days.

Children of any age should see a doctor or nurse if they have:

- Fevers that keep coming back (even if they last only a few hours)
- A fever as well as any ongoing medical problem
- A fever as well as a new skin rash

Go to the Emergency Department (or call 911) if you or your child:

- Has a seizure
- Has trouble breathing
- Stops responding to you or experiencing confusion

What can I do to feel better?

- Get plenty of rest.
- Drink lots of fluids (water, juice, or broth) to stay hydrated. This helps replace any fluids lost if you have a runny nose or sweating from a fever. Warm tea or soup can help soothe a sore throat.
- You can also take acetaminophen (ie. Tylenol) to relieve fever. Please consult your Pharmacist for the safest option prior to use if you take any other medications.

For Children:

- Offer your child lots of fluids to drink. Call the doctor or nurse if the child won't or can't drink fluids for more than a few hours.
- Encourage your child to rest as much as they want. But don't force them to sleep or rest. (Your child can go back to school or regular activities after they have had a normal temperature for 24 hours.)
- Some parents give their children sponge baths to cool them down, but that is not usually necessary. Sometimes, people think that they can cool a child down by putting rubbing alcohol on their skin or adding it to a bath. But this is **dangerous**. Do not use any kind of alcohol to try to treat a fever.

How are fevers treated?

That depends on the cause. Many people do not need treatment. If you do, treatments can include:

Antibiotics to fight the infection. But antibiotics only work on infections caused by bacteria, not infections caused by viruses. For example, antibiotics will not work on a cold.

Medicines, such as acetaminophen (ie Tylenol) or ibuprofen (ie Advil, Motrin). These medicines can help bring down a fever. But they are not always necessary.

- For instance, a child older than 6 months who has a fever, and who is otherwise healthy and acting normally, does not need treatment.
- Never give aspirin to a child younger than 18 years old. Aspirin can cause a dangerous condition called Reye syndrome.

If you do make an appointment to be seen by a Health Care Provider in office please ensure you:

- Wear a mask, which we ask you to wear for the duration of your time in the office.
- Depending on your symptoms they may direct you to be seated in our isolation room where the provider will conduct your visit.
- Use hand sanitizer to sanitize hands throughout your visit. Hand sanitizer pumps are found throughout the office for patient use.
- Distance yourself from other patients in the waiting room as much as possible.