

4 Managing fever

OVERVIEW



Fever is present when a person's body feels hot to the touch. Fever is the body's reaction to infection.

Fever in very young children and babies may be a sign of serious illness.

What you need to KNOW

- ➔ Fever is caused by the body's reaction to infections. It is a signal to us that an infection is present.
- ➔ Fever is raised body temperature. It makes the person feel hot, can cause chills (shivering) and is very uncomfortable.
- ➔ Fever can be serious. If it is very high, it can cause convulsions (violent shaking of the body) in young children.
- ➔ Fever can cause the body to lose liquids and become dehydrated.

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What you can DO

1. Check the person's condition.
2. Ask about other symptoms, such as rash, headache, vomiting, cough or pain.
3. If the fever is high or if the person has had convulsions, refer him/her to a health facility immediately.
4. If the patient can drink, eat and move about:
 - Give more fluids to drink than usual.
 - Encourage babies to breastfeed as much as possible.
 - Encourage rest.
 - Give nutritious food.
5. Cool the body down by:
 - Removing excess clothing.
 - Wiping a sponge or a cloth soaked in tepid (lukewarm) water over the body and forehead.
 - Bathing babies in tepid water, observing them closely for convulsions.

If the fever does not go away or becomes worse, seek the help of a health professional.

In areas affected by an epidemic, the fever can be a sign that the person has the disease in question. If fever is one of the symptoms of the disease, such as in meningitis, malaria or dengue, you should report the case as part of your surveillance activities and follow the actions indicated for prevention and treatment.



Checking for fever