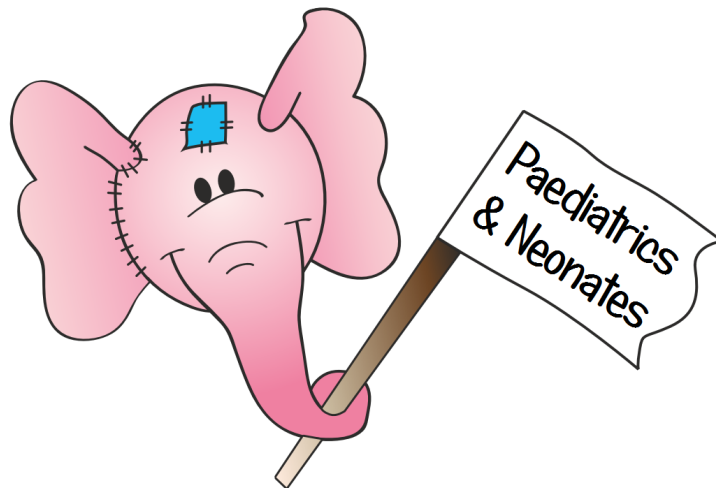


# Fever of unknown cause – advice for carers of children under five

**Children's Ward**

**Parent/Carer Information Leaflet**



## Introduction

This leaflet contains advice for carers of children younger than five years who have a fever of an unknown cause.

We think that your child is well enough to go home now. However, if:

- your child's health gets worse
- your child has a fit
- your child develops a rash that does not disappear with pressure (see the 'Rashes and the tumbler test' section)
- the fever lasts longer than five days
- you are concerned your child is dehydrated (see the 'What should I do when my child has a fever?' section)

you should ring the Children's Ward on 01384 244271 for advice. In an emergency, take them to the Emergency Department as soon as possible or dial 999 for an ambulance.

## What should I do when my child has a fever?

- Offer your child regular drinks. If you are breastfeeding, breast milk is best.
- Check for signs that your child may be dehydrated such as a dry mouth, no tears, sunken eyes, a sunken fontanelle (the soft spot on a baby's head) and how much urine they have passed. If you notice any of these signs, ring the Children's Ward on 01384 244271 for advice.
- Examine 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 the 'Rashes and the tumbler test' section).
- Check on your child during the night.
- Do not try to reduce your child's fever with medicine. However, if your child is distressed or uncomfortable, or if you have been advised to do so by your child's consultant or nurse, you can give them medicine. For more information, see the section 'Fever and medicines'.
- Keep your child away from school or nursery while they have a fever.

If you have been asked to provide a urine sample from your child, please bring it to the hospital within 24 hours, if possible.

## Fever and medicines

Fever is a natural and healthy response to infection so do not try to reduce your child's temperature by over- or under-dressing them, or by sponging them with cool water.

Although it is not necessary to treat fever, there are two medicines that can be used to treat the distress caused by fever and being unwell that may help your child feel better. These are ibuprofen and paracetamol. They are both effective so you should start with one and only use the other if the first has not worked. Do not give both medicines at the same time, unless advised otherwise by a doctor.

Read the instructions carefully as these medicines come in different strengths. They may also be included in other medicines available in pharmacies so if you have any doubt, you should tell the pharmacist what you are currently using and they will be able to advise you. Although both are very safe when used correctly, they may be harmful if too large a dose is given or if they are given too often.

## Rashes and the tumbler test

If your child has a rash, you should do the 'tumbler test'. To do this, 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' (please see figure 1).

**If your child has a non-blanching rash, seek medical advice immediately.**



Figure 1 – a non-blanching rash  
(Photo courtesy of the Meningitis Research Foundation)

If the spots fade when the glass is rolled over them, the rash is probably not serious but you should keep checking as it can develop into a rash that does not fade.

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 and tummy.

**If you are worried that your child's health is getting worse, seek further medical advice. You do not have to wait for a rash to appear.**

## Reference

The Information in this leaflet has been taken from the National Institute of Clinical Excellence (NICE):

NICE (2013) *NICE Guideline CG160: Feverish illness in children: Assessment and initial management in children younger than 5 years.* London. Available from:

[Feverish illness in children | Guidance and guidelines | NICE](#)

If you have any questions or if there is anything you do not understand about this leaflet, please contact:

Children's ward on 01384 244271

Russells Hall Hospital switchboard number: 01384 456111

**This leaflet can be downloaded or printed from:**

<http://dudleygroup.nhs.uk/services-and-wards/paediatrics-and-neonatology/>

If you have any feedback on this patient information leaflet, please email [dgft.patient.information@nhs.net](mailto:dgft.patient.information@nhs.net)

**This leaflet can be made available in large print, audio version and in other languages, please call 0800 073 0510.**

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Ulotka dostępna jest również w dużym druku, wersji audio lub w innym języku. W tym celu zadzwoń pod numer 0800 073 0510.

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Aceasta broșura poate fi pusă la dispoziție tipărită cu caractere mari, versiune audio sau în alte limbi, pentru acest lucru va rugăm sunați la 0800 073 0510.

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