

Fever in children

Following your visit to the **Brisbane Northside Emergency Centre**, the doctor is happy that you are well enough to go home. This fact sheet will provide you with additional information to assist you with your recovery.

Warning signs

Please return to the **BNE** or visit your GP without a delay if you experience any of the following:

- Recurrent fever in a child that is less than 3 months old
- If your child is disinterested in surrounds or is sluggish
- If your child is refusing to breastfeed or drink fluids
- Difficulty to wake the child
- Difficulty breathing
- Excessive drooling or difficulty swallowing
- New symptoms such as: earache or sore throat, severe abdominal pain, pain during urination
- Fits or convulsions.

Please call us or return to our centre if you have any concerns. Alternatively, your general practitioner has received information regarding your visit to **BNE** and can address any concerns you may have.

What is a fever?

- A fever is an elevation in body temperature and is one of the most common reasons for children to visit the doctor. A child is considered to have a fever when the temperature is greater than 37.5 degrees (*tympanic ear thermometer*).
- This elevation in body temperature can be caused by either a virus or bacteria. Over 90 per cent of fevers in children are caused by viral infections and antibiotics are of no benefit. Bacterial infection can also cause a fever. The doctor may sometimes decide to perform some tests to look for the cause of the fever.
- Many people worry that a fever is hurting the child or that a high fever means that your child has a serious illness, but this is not necessarily the case. A reasonable fever (37.5 degrees and 39 degrees) is helpful and shortens the duration of the illness as it is an indication that the child's immune system is fighting the infection.
- The only risk is febrile convulsions or a persistent fever such as 39 degrees or over that does not settle with simple measures.

If your child has a seizure, or the febrile illness is prolonged, it is important to see a doctor, to see if any investigations are required.

Treatment of fever

If your child is happy, don't worry about the reading on the thermometer too much. Lowering the body temperature does not shorten or help the body to fight the infection.

Sometimes fever can make your child feel miserable. It makes their body lose fluid more rapidly and requires more food and fluid intake to meet metabolic demands. Therefore, you should aim to treat any discomfort your child is feeling.

You can do this by:

- Ensuring your child drinks plenty of fluids
- Avoid overdressing your child
- Give regular analgesia if the child is in discomfort. Paracetamol (*Panadol*) and Ibuprofen (*Neurofen*) relieves pain and fever
- Offer the child food more frequently, even small amounts but avoid excess sugar as it slows the body's immune response
- Tepid bath or shower.

OPEN 24 HOURS. 7 DAYS

627 Rode Road Chermside

Located between The Prince Charles and Holy Spirit Northside Private Hospitals.

www.emergencyBNE.com.au