



healthy children

Powered by pediatricians. Trusted by parents.

American Academy
of Pediatrics



DEDICATED TO THE HEALTH OF ALL CHILDREN™

[Healthy Children](#) > [Tips & Tools](#) > [KidsDoc Symptom Checker](#) > [Fever](#)

Fever

[select new symptom](#)

Related Symptoms: [Colds](#), [Cough](#), [Diarrhea](#), [Earache](#), [Immunization Reactions](#), [Rash - Widespread and Cause Unknown](#), [Sinus Pain or Congestion](#), [Sore Throat](#), [Vomiting](#),

[Definition](#)

[When To Call](#)

[Care Advice](#)

[Photos](#)



[select new symptom](#)

Definition

Your child has a fever if:

- [Rectal, Ear or Temporal Artery](#) (TA) temperature: 100.4° F (38.0° C) or higher
- Oral or Pacifier temperature: 100° F (37.8° C) or higher
- Under the arm (Axillary or armpit) temperature: 99° F (37.2° C) or higher
- Limitation: Ear (Tympanic Membrane) temperatures are not reliable before 6 months of age
- Temporal artery and skin infrared temperatures may be reliable in young infants (new research)
- Use this guideline if fever is your child's only symptom

Causes

- Main cause: colds and other viral infections
- Fever may be the only symptom for the first 24 hours (i.e., viral fevers). The onset of symptoms (runny nose, cough, diarrhea, etc.) are often delayed. In the case of [Roseola](#), fever may be the only symptom for 2 or 3 days.
- The cause of the fever usually can't be determined until other symptoms develop. That may take 24 hours.
- Bacterial infections (e.g., [Strep throat](#) or [urinary tract infections](#)) also cause fever
- [Teething](#) does not cause fever

Fever and Crying

- Fever on its own shouldn't cause much crying
- Frequent crying in a child with fever is caused by pain until proven otherwise
- Possible causes are ear infections, urinary tract infections and sore throats

Normal Variation of Temperature

- Rectal: A reading of 98.6° F (37° C) is just the average rectal temperature. It normally can change from 96.8° F (36° C) in the morning to a high of 100.3° F (37.9° C) in the late afternoon.
- Oral: A reading of 97.6° F (36.5° C) is just the average oral temperature. It normally can change from a low of 95.8° F (35.5° C) in the morning to a high of 99.9° F (37.7° C) in the late afternoon.

Return to School

- Your child can return to child care or school after the fever is gone and your child feels well enough to participate in normal activities.

[select new symptom](#)