

COLDS, FLU, FEVER AGAIN??

I. What causes them?

Most of the time viruses. That's why we are so cool about waiting it out. As you know, we usually don't treat viruses with medications. The best treatment is plenty of fluids and lots of rest. You can also try to control the temperature with acetaminophen, ibuprofen, or lukewarm soaks.

II. So are you saying we shouldn't worry about fevers?

Again most of the time no! Fever is the natural response of the body to infections. Our body actually is thought to fight infections better at higher temperatures. But we want to try to control it occasionally so we can evaluate the child. Of note, all kids with fevers have faster heart rates, faster breathing, and act less energetic. So see what they look like when they have cooled off some. Keep in mind that sudden changes in temperature can precipitate febrile seizures, especially in kids less than five years old. For example, submerging a child in cold water would be too quick a change. We wouldn't want to overbundle a child, either.

III. So when should I worry about a fever?

- In any child less than 3 months of age, i.e. rectal temperature greater than 100.4 F or 38.0 C
- In any child less than 2 years of age who does not have concurrent symptoms like runny nose, diarrhea, cough.
- In any child who cannot make eye contact with you and is very somnolent/irritable despite controlling the fever.
- In any child who has an associated rash (that is not obvious to you, like chickenpox).
- In any child who is having a difficult time breathing. You can evaluate after bringing the fever down based on how fast they are breathing, how active their chest muscles are (are they going in and out?), and whether their nostrils are flaring.
- Persistent vomiting
- Neck stiffness, eye pain from light.
- If there is no urine for eight hours or more.
- If a fever develops one week or more into the illness.

IV. But what if my child isn't eating?

Most kids who are sick won't eat until they feel better. But they need to drink for two main reasons:

New Day Pediatrics

419 -30th Street
Oakland, CA 94609

www.newdaypediatrics.com

Phone: (510) 465-4445

Fax: (510) 208-0437

- The body fights infections better when it is well-hydrated (has enough water on board).
- Children with fever lose more water through their skin and increased breathing.

V. Is milk O.K. for colds?

Yes, it is. It does not increase mucous, unless you have a milk allergy.

VI. So if my child has a cold without a fever how long should I wait to be seen?

About 1 ½ -2 weeks, or if he/she is complaining of ear pain.

VII. How come my child is always sick?

Preschoolers get 9-15 colds, on average, every year. They are spread through respiratory droplets or most commonly dirty hands in eyes, nose, and mouth. Frequent handwashing can help.

VIII. What is the treatment for ear infections?

The recommendations have changed since 2-3 years ago. Now many doctors are waiting 1-2 days to treat ear infections with antibiotics, because more than ¾ of them resolve on their own. We also may treat them for a shorter period of time.

IX. What if my child doesn't fit the red flag categories, but I still want to be seen?

That is perfectly fine. You can always call us with your questions or make an appointment to be seen.