



Children's Health

Do you believe these myths about fever?

Fever makes parents anxious. However, fever is now known to be a good thing, and parental concerns are usually misplaced. Do you believe any of these myths?

Myth: Fever is bad for you

Fever is a symptom of an underlying illness, usually a viral infection and, in itself, is harmless. Fever from an infection will not cause brain damage or affect a child's development. Fever helps fight infection. It stimulates certain cells and chemicals which kill germs. Fever is a warning that there may be a problem requiring treatment. Other signs such as rash, lethargy and poor feeding may also be present. Some infections such as meningitis or pneumonia can be serious and your doctor may need to check for them.

Myth: Treating fever prevents fits

About 1 in 25 children aged 6 months to 6 years of age have a seizure due to a fever. These fits are frightening to parents but are

not harmful and do not cause brain damage. There is now a lot of evidence that lowering the temperature does **not** prevent seizures.

Myth: It is important to treat a fever

Fever is harmless and does not need to be treated just because it is there. In any case, the drugs used for fever (paracetamol and ibuprofen) have a very modest effect, if any. However, a fever can make a child miserable, cause aching, headache, discomfort and lethargy. Medication, extra fluids and light clothing can help relieve these symptoms.

Myth: Alternating drugs is beneficial

Some parents are now using paracetamol and ibuprofen alternately or together. However, there is no evidence that this is more effective than using only one medicine.

There is also an increased risk of incorrect dosing and more side effects. Most doctors do not recommend this practice.

An update on middle ear infection

Almost all children have one or more middle ear infections (otitis media) before starting school. Middle ear infections are most common in the 6-24 month age group, especially in the cooler months.

Middle ear infection is an infection of the small space just behind the eardrum. Ear infections often occur 3-4 days after a head cold and can be due to viruses or bacteria.

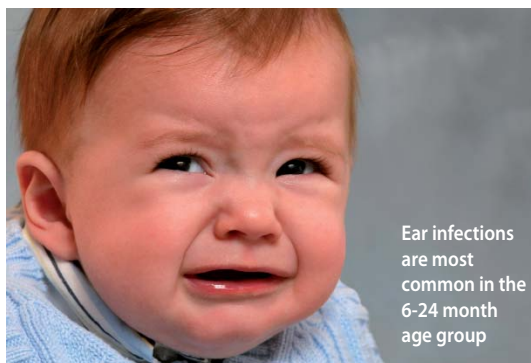
The most common symptoms are earache and fever. Other complaints are pulling at the ear, being irritable, hearing problems, vomiting, diarrhoea or loss of appetite. Occasionally the eardrum will rupture, producing a discharge from the ear.

Most cases resolve within a few days, but in some cases a sticky fluid remains in the ear behind the eardrum, which can reduce hearing (glue ear). Untreated, this can impair speech development and learning.

How to prevent ear infections

Some proven prevention strategies are:

- Reduce exposure to cigarette smoke
- Stop dummies after 11 months
- Cut back attendance at day care or kindy



Ear infections are most common in the 6-24 month age group

- Breastfeed 6-12 months if possible
- Flu and pneumococcal vaccination

Antibiotics not usually needed

Most ear infections get better on their own and antibiotics are not usually needed, except in severe cases or for babies under 6 months. Antibiotics may be prescribed if the condition does not improve in 24-48 hours.

Give your child paracetamol to relieve pain. Local anaesthetic drops can give relief and a warm pack to the outer ear can be soothing.

A check-up one month later is usually advised to detect a persisting glue ear.

SURGERY INFO

HOUSE CALLS

We are happy to visit you at home if you are too sick to come to the surgery. Please ring 9123 4567 before 10 am if possible so house calls can be made at lunchtime.

AFTER-HOURS

When the surgery is closed, please ring the Westside Medical Service on 9999 1234 and a doctor will visit you at home.

OUR PRACTICE

Our friendly reception staff, Melissa (Practice Manager), Jane and Margaret, are available to make bookings or help in any way.

All patient information and medical records are kept strictly confidential.

TELEPHONE CALLS

You can contact your doctor by ringing during surgery hours. Emergency calls will always be put straight through.

SERVICES

As well as routine consultations, the following services are available:

- Home visits
- Family planning, Pap smears, Pregnancy tests, Ante-natal care
- ECG: heart check
- Spirometry: lung test
- Counselling
- Vaccination: children and travel
- Blood tests
- Minor surgery: stitching cuts, removing moles, skin cancers
- Liquid nitrogen 'freezing' therapy for sunspots and warts
- Sports medicine
- Spinal manipulation

FEEES

All eligible patients are bulk-billed for surgery consultations. Please bring your Medicare card with you to the surgery.

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