



A fever is one of the primary reasons that parents will contact a pediatrician even when it's not necessary. Dr. Barton Schmitt coined the phrase "fever phobia" in 1980 because many parents believed that untreated fevers could actually rise to critical levels and even low-grade fevers could have serious neurological effects. This is just not true.

For all children above the age of 3 months, a fever is actually a good thing, it's a sign that their immune systems are reacting properly to a bacterial or viral infection.

- A true low grade fever is anything between 100°F and 102.2°F (37.8°C and 39°C). This is beneficial and with most "bugs" that a child will be exposed to, this fever will assist the body in repelling the invader
- A moderate-grade fever is typically between 102.2°F and 104.5°F (39°C and 40°C). This temperature is still considered beneficial and, if a child's body has reached this, it's what's needed to kill whatever bacteria or virus their body is attempting to fight
- A high fever is going to be over 104.5°F (40°C). This fever may cause the child some discomfort and result in a bit of crankiness. Generally indicative of a bacterial infection, this fever means that the body is fighting something a little more serious than the common cold and, while it will not cause brain damage or any other harm to your child it is wise to seek assistance from your healthcare provider
- A serious fever is one that is at or above 108°F (42°C) as this fever can be harmful

The only body temperature that is "dangerous" and can actually cause brain damage is 108°F (42°C) and this temperature cannot be reached on its own but requires extreme environmental temperatures, for instance, being left in a closed car in hot weather.

It is recommended that you seek medical care for any of the following:

- If a child younger than 3 months is running any grade of fever
- If a child between 3 months and 3 years has a temperature above 102.2°F (39°C) and appears ill – it should be noted that even teething may also cause a slight increase in temperature
- A child of any age that has a temperature over 104.5°F (40°C)

Your Family Wellness Chiropractor is the only healthcare professional that recognizes and supports the body's natural ability to fight off infection. The immune system, like all other bodily systems, is controlled by the central nervous system via the spinal cord, which is housed in the spine. Your Doctor of Chiropractic helps keep the spine aligned allowing messages to travel without interruption from the brain to the rest of the body.

A fever is, quite simply, a natural part of your child's immune system. When it is functioning at its absolute best, your child's body will fight off most foreign invaders so swiftly that they will have no outward effect at all. However, when necessary your child's immune system will raise their temperature to create a hostile environment for that invader. It's how a properly functioning body functions.

Resources:

*Pediatric Advisor 2009:1: Fever Myths and Facts, University of Michigan Health System
Pediatric Advisor 2011:1: Fever Myths and Facts, Children's Physicians Network
articles.mercola.com/sites/articles/archive/2005/01/05/fever-part-two.aspx
Klass, P. Lifting a Veil of Fear to See a Few Benefits of Fever, New York Times January 10, 2011*

The information is intended to inform and educate and is not a replacement for medical advice by a healthcare professional.