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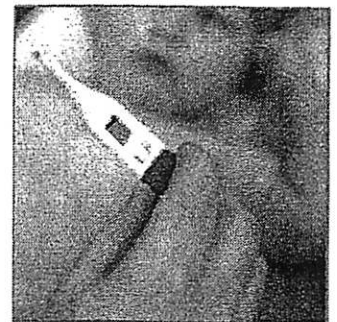
## Health Issues

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### When to Call the Pediatrician

If your child is two months or younger and has a rectal temperature of 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit (38 degrees Celsius) or higher, call your pediatrician immediately. *This is an absolute necessity.* The doctor will need to examine the baby to rule out any serious infection or disease.

You also may need to notify the doctor if your child is between three and six months and has a fever of 101 degrees Fahrenheit (38.3 degrees Celsius) or greater, or is older than six months and has a temperature of 103 degrees Fahrenheit (39.4 degrees Celsius) or higher. Such a high temperature may indicate a significant infection or dehydration, which may require treatment. However, in most cases, your decision to call the pediatrician should depend on associated symptoms, such as a severe sore throat, a severe earache, a cough, an unexplained rash, or repeated vomiting or diarrhea. Also, if your child is very fussy or sleeping more than usual, call your doctor. In fact, your child's activity level tends to be a more important indicator than the height of the fever. Again, fever in and of itself is not a sickness. It is a sign of sickness.



If your child is over one year of age, is eating and sleeping well, and has playful moments, there usually is no need to call the doctor immediately. If a high fever persists for more than twenty-four hours, however, it is best to call even if there are no other complaints or findings.

If your child becomes delirious (acts frightened, "sees" objects that are not there, talks strangely) while he has a high fever, call your pediatrician, particularly if this has not occurred before. These unusual symptoms probably will disappear when the temperature returns to normal, but the doctor may want to examine your child to make sure they are a response to the fever and not something more serious, such as an inflammation of the brain (encephalitis) or membranes covering the brain and spinal cord (meningitis).

Other circumstances should prompt an immediate call to your pediatrician. For example, contact your doctor if your child is feverish and has been in an extremely hot place, such as an overheated car. Also, talk to your pediatrician if your youngster has a fever and has a condition that suppresses immune responses, such as sickle cell disease or cancer, or if he is taking steroids.

If your child has a febrile convulsion (or seizure), he should be examined by your pediatrician or taken to the pediatric emergency room after consulting with your pediatrician as soon as possible, particularly if this is the first time it has occurred, or if it is more severe or prolonged than others he has had. You need to be sure that the convulsion is due to fever and not to a more serious condition such as meningitis.

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**Source** [Caring for Your Baby and Young Child: Birth to Age 5 \(Copyright © 2009 American Academy of Pediatrics\)](#)

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