

# natural pediatrics

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## KNOW THE RIGHT WAY TO MANAGE YOUR SICK KID

1. **USE A DIGITAL THERMOMETER:** Of the five basic types of thermometers on the market, a digital thermometer is the most accurate because it uses electronic heat sensors to determine body temperature. Digital thermometers are best used orally or, in infants, rectally.
2. **LOW GRADE FEVER:** Most parents believe a fever is any reading above 98.6°. Not doctors. They use the actual medical definition of 100.4°. Call a pediatrician if an infant younger than 3 months old has a temperature of 100.4° or higher. If they're 3-6 months old, the threshold is 101°; 103° if older.

Don't head for the medicine cabinet to snuff out the first signs of rising body temperature. Fever is a good sign of a robust immune system. Fever actually speeds recovery from viral infections, according to a clinical report published last year in the medical journal *Pediatrics*. *parents "can and should try a fever reducer" if their child:*

- *Is behaving out of character*
- *Seems uncomfortably cranky or tired*
- *Has muscle pain with his fever*
- *Or you just have a gut feeling he's not well*

3. **DON'T USE CHILDREN'S MULTI-SYMPTOM COLD MEDICATION:** there's no evidence that cold medications do anything to relieve cold symptoms in children under 12, according to the Food and Drug Administration (FDA). For younger children, they're potentially hazardous. Cough and cold medications are among the most common reasons for calls to poison control centers, according to a Stanford University study updated in 2011.

Our advise to parents to handle a cold:

- **Use humidifiers** (warm or cool mist) to keep airways moist so that kids can breathe easier.
- **Apply saline nose drops and sprays** to reduce the inflammation in nasal passages for better breathing. Buy these over the counter or make your own with 1/4 teaspoon of salt in a cup of water.
- **Use bulb syringes** to clear out babies' noses so they can breathe. Put a few drops of saline nasal solution in one nostril at a time, then use the bulb syringe to suction out the mucus.
- **Give kids lots of fluids** to loosen congestion and prevent dehydration.
- **Use acetaminophen/ibuprofen** to reduce achiness and high fevers.
- **Try buckwheat honey**, which quiets a nighttime cough, according to a study in the *Archives of Pediatrics and Adolescent Medicine*. Give 1 teaspoon before bedtime – but only to children over age 1. (Never offer honey to infants under 12 months old. It can cause infant botulism.)



4. **DON'T PRESSURE YOUR PEDIATRICIAN FOR ANTIBIOTICS:** If you're begging for an antibiotic to knock out your kid's cold or flu, save your breath. It's not that doctors are holding out on you, it's that antibiotics work only on bacterial infections.

Giving children antibiotics when they're not needed helps breed drug-resistant bacteria, so they're less effective when they are needed.

Plus, antibiotics can trigger other problems, such as diarrhea, yeast infections and allergic reactions.

Normally, we say you can wait a few days with fever, but not if it's flu season. If the flu is in the area and your child has a high fever and body aches, they should absolutely see the pediatrician, especially if they have a chronic health condition like diabetes or asthma, or they're under 5.

5. **USE THE RIGHT MEASURE:** Teaspoons in everyday silverware vary and may hold as much as 7.3 ml or as little as 2.5 ml. A "true" teaspoon – like the one you use to cook and bake with – equals 5 milliliters.
6. **DON'T MAKE YOUR KIDS VOMIT AFTER SWALLOWING A POISONOUS SUBSTANCE:** Caustic substances like Drano – which, oddly enough, has a sweet taste that children love – can damage your child's esophagus when swallowed. If you force her to vomit it back up, the esophagus gets burned twice. If your child swallows any potentially toxic substance – including over-the-counter and prescription medications – call the national Poison Control hotline at (800) 222-1222 immediately. Operators will give you precise instructions on what to do. (The hotline operates 24/7.)
7. **DON'T PUT COLD PACK ON BURNS:** When kids burn fingers – or any body part – it's important to act fast and cool the area down. Apply cold water or ice to the area, but avoid a freezer pack (including frozen vegetables), which can cause frost bites. Take your child to the pediatrician for serious burns, or if pain and redness lasts more than a few hours.
8. **DON'T TREAT NAUSEA WITH PEPTO-BISMOL:** This go-to upset-tummy remedy has the aspirin compound bismuth subsalicylate, and giving aspirin to any child under 18 when they have a virus (particularly chickenpox and flu) can cause a potentially fatal liver infection called Reye syndrome. For tummy aches, the better remedy is Maalox, a mild laxative and antacid.
9. **BE CAREFUL OF BRAT DIET FOR DIARRHEA:** Bananas, rice, applesauce and toast has fallen out of favor as pediatricians' favorite home remedy for diarrhea. The BRAT diet can be helpful, however, for a child who has been vomiting, after it stops. Dehydration is the biggest concern with diarrhea. If it's been an hour since your child threw up, offer small amounts of water or a rehydration solution like Pedialyte – a teaspoon at a time every 5 minutes. When they can keep that down, give them lactose-free milk, soy milk or milk-based liquid nutritional supplements for protein, which helps the gut recover.

Source: <http://www.lifescrypt.com>

