

Fever in a child under 5

If your child has a fever you may wish to use the traffic light table below to help you determine how serious it is, and the most sensible action to take.

Things can change rapidly with children. You may need to change the plan. If in doubt call 111 or the surgery.

Traffic Light assessment table of the risk of serious illness (adapted from the NICE guideline)

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| | Green – manage at home or call for advice if any concerns | Amber – any amber signs see or call GP same day | Red – high risk – Any red signs call 999 for an ambulance |
| Colour (skin, lips or tongue) | Normal | Pale | Blue/mottled/ very pale/purple/ashen |
| Activity | Strong normal cry/not crying Content/smiles Responds to normal interaction Stays awake or easy to wake | Not responding to normal social cues No smile Sleeping a lot Decreased activity Grizzly | No response to social cues Appears ill to a healthcare professional Unroutable or very drowsy Floppy Weak, high pitched cry |
| Breathing | | Nostril flaring Fast breathing Crackly sounding breathing or wheeze | Grunting Panting Chest indrawing Base of neck tugging Struggling to breathe Exhausted |
| Hydration | Normal skin and eyes Wet mouth and lips | Fast heart rate Dry mouth and lips Poor feeding in babies Dry nappies or not passing much urine | Sunken eyes Pale or blue fingers and toes Dry mouth Pounding heart rate Not feeding Not passing urine |
| Other | None of the amber or red signs | Age 3-6m temperature 39 degrees C or more Fever for 5 or more days Shakes/shivers | Age under 3 months and temperature 38 degrees C or more Glass test positive rash Bulging fontanelle |
| | | Arm or leg or joint swelling Not walking properly or using their arm or leg properly | Neck is stiff Fits Weakness one or other side or in the face |
| | Low Risk Home +/- telephone advice | Intermediate Risk GP | High risk HOSPITAL |