



Southport and
Ormskirk Hospital
NHS Trust

PATIENT INFORMATION

FEVER IN ADULTS

WHAT IS FEVER?

A fever (also known as pyrexia or a high temperature) is a temporary increase in body temperature. A fever is defined as a temperature of over 38.0°C. A fever is a common side effect of illness and indicates your immune system is fighting an infection. You are receiving this information leaflet as the clinician has decided you do not need to stay in hospital, and you are well enough to go home.

CAUSES

Fever is usually caused by a viral or bacterial illness. Common causes include:

- Upper and lower respiratory tract infections (such as pneumonia)
- Skin infections (such as cellulitis)
- Urinary tract infections
- Colds/Flu
- Gastrointestinal infections (such as food poisoning)
- Heatstroke

Not all of these conditions will require antibiotics or other medications.

SYMPTOMS

The symptoms people experience with a fever are usually due to the underlying cause of the fever, rather than the fever itself. You may feel generally unwell. Common symptoms include:

- Sweating
- Chills (shivering)
- Headaches
- Muscle pain (myalgia)
- Joint pain (arthralgia)
- Weakness
- Tiredness (fatigue)
- Loss of appetite

MANAGEMENT

Most fevers will improve on their own within a few days. There are a few things you can do to ease the uncomfortable symptoms associated with fever. These include:

- Drink plenty of fluids
 - This will help your body rehydrate and may decrease your temperature. You should be passing urine at least every 6 hours and it should be pale yellow in colour.
- Avoid alcohol as this can worsen dehydration.
- Wear loose, comfortable clothing.
- Regular paracetamol can help with pain. Do not take with the sole aim of reducing temperature.
 - Usually 1-2 tablets, every 4-6 hours, maximum 4g (8 Tablets) in 24 hours. Avoid additional paracetamol if you're taking any other medication containing paracetamol (co-codamol, co-dydramol, cold and flu tablets/sachets). Take as advised by your healthcare professional.
- Regular ibuprofen can also help with pain. Do not take

with the sole aim of reducing temperature.

- Usually 400mg every 6-8 hours. Please do not take if you have previously been advised not to by a healthcare professional. Do not take if you have stomach ulcers/asthma/increased risk of bleeding (e.g. because you are taking anticoagulant medication). Take as advised by your healthcare professional.
- Get plenty of rest.
- Do not use hot water bottles or electric blankets.

WHEN TO SEEK IMMEDIATE MEDICAL ATTENTION

You should seek immediate medical attention if you or anyone else has any concerns. Please seek immediate medical attention if any of the following symptoms occur:

- Sensitivity to light (photophobia)
- Neck stiffness (you cannot put your chin onto your chest)
- Mottled or discoloured skin
- Difficulty in breathing or shortness of breath
- Chest pain
- Confusion or behaving strangely
- Seizures
- Hallucinations
- Not passed urine in 12 hours
- If you are very sleepy or difficult to wake

You should seek immediate medical attention by attending your nearest Accident and Emergency Department or by calling 999.

WHO TO CONTACT IF YOU ARE CONCERNED

NHS111, your GP or return to A&E. If any of the symptoms above are mentioned please attend Accident & Emergency immediately or call 999.

During your contact with us, it is important that you are happy with your care and treatment. Please speak to a member of staff and/or the ward/department Sister/Charge Nurse if you have questions or concerns.

MATRON

A Matron is also available during the hours of 9am to 5pm Monday to Friday. During these periods, ward/department staff can contact Matron to arrange to meet with you. Out of hours, a Senior Nurse can be contacted via the ward/department to deal with any concerns you may have.

INFECTION CONTROL REQUEST

Preventing infections is a crucial part of our patients' care. To ensure that our standards remain high our staff have regular infection prevention and control training and their practice is monitored in the workplace. We ask patients and visitors to assist us in preventing infections by cleaning their hands at regular intervals and informing staff of areas within the hospital that appear soiled.

As a patient there may be times that you are unsure whether a staff member has cleaned their hands; if in doubt please ask the staff member and they will be only too happy to put your mind at ease by cleaning their hands so that you can see them.

SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS

ANY CONDITION SPECIFIC DANGER SIGNALS TO LOOK OUT FOR:

CONTACT INFORMATION IF YOU ARE WORRIED ABOUT YOUR CONDITION

- Your own GP

OTHER USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS/CONTACTS:

NHS 111

Stop Smoking Helpline (Sefton) – 0300 100 1000

Stop Smoking Helpline (West Lancashire) – 0800 328 6297

**Please call 01704 704714 if you need
this leaflet in an alternative format**

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