

## What is fever?

- Fever is a symptom, not a disease. Fever turns on the body's immune system and is one of the body's protective mechanisms. Most fevers are good for people and help the body fight infection. Normal body temperature changes throughout the day, usually peaking in the late afternoon and evening. Rectal temperatures are higher than oral temperatures. Average body temperature is about 98.6 degrees Fahrenheit or 37 degrees Celsius. Most doctors define a fever as a temperature of 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit or 38.0 degrees Celsius when taken rectally.

## When to see a doctor:

- Fever in an individual who is acting very ill
- Fever lasting 3 or more days
- Very high temperatures (104 degrees Fahrenheit or 40 degrees Celsius)
- Fever in an infant less than 2 – 3 months old
- Fever developing later in an illness
- Seizures related to a fever

## Treatment

- Fevers should be treated only if they cause discomfort, usually over 102 degrees
- Treatment with fever reducing medication brings the fever down 2 – 3 degrees, but it may then fluctuate back up later and more medicine may be needed
- Acetaminophen or ibuprofen products may be used to decrease discomfort if the child's fever is over 101 degrees
- Encourage extra fluids
- Remove extra clothing
- Never give aspirin for fever in young children

## Are there complications?

- Febrile seizures are uncommon in most children and are not harmful
- Body temperatures over 108 degrees can cause brain damage. The body temperature goes this high with high environmental temperatures (i.e. confined in a closed car)

## Should the sick individual be isolated?

- Yes. Until after the temperature is below 100°F without medication for 24 hours

## When can the individual return to the general population?

- Individuals may return after temperature is below 100°F without medication for 24 hours

## If I have any other questions, whom can I contact?

- Call the Genesee County Health Department at 257-1017