IN HEALTH NATUROPATHIC MEDICINE
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Understanding and Management of Fever

Any time a child is sick, we as parents or caregivers instictively want to intervene on their behalf. In the case of fever, however, our efforts may be counterproductive. Your child's ability to generate a fever is an eloquent demonstration of his/her body's innate self-healing potential. The immune system's response to infection is an amazing process which includes the following events:

- Additional white blood cells are manufactured. These cells destroy bacteria and viruses and also remove damaged tissue and irritating materials from the body.
- The activity of the white blood cells increases, and they move rapidly to the site of infection.
- Antibody production increases by as much as 20-fold.
- You get sleepy and loose your appetite. This conserves energy for natural defense and repair.
- The elevated body temperature kills certain bacteria and viruses.
- Iron is being removed from the blood and stored in the liver. Many bacteria need iron for survival.

An elevated body temperature is integral to this process. Hippocrates knew this when he said, "give me a fever and I can cure any disease." Suppressing the fever may interfere with healing and prolong the infection.

Facts About Fever

- Fever is part of the body's normal response to infection. Fever is a symptom not a disease.
- A child may be lethargic or flushed, may have a rapid and strong heart beat, and may even hallucinate during a fever.
- Fevers generated in the course of an illness are not in and of themselves dangerous. The underlying cause of the fever and how sick your child looks are more important than the height of the fever.
- Fevers due to infection do not rise above 106 degrees and cannot harm your child.
- Fevers of 107 and 108 degrees can cause brain damage and usually result from heat stroke or accidental poisoning. Routine infections do not produce fevers of this degree.
- It is normal for one out of twenty healthy children under the age of five to have a fever convulsion. These febrile seizures usually last only a few minutes and produce no lasting or harmful effects.
- Fevers can result from overdressing. Dress your child in as many layers as they find comfortable.

Misconceptions About Fever

- Routine fevers are not usually dangerous. The underlying cause of the fever or dehydration from inadequate fluid consumption is the source of any potential problems.
- You cannot judge the severity of the condition by the height of the fever. **Above all else, how your child looks and acts determines the likelihood of a serious problem.** A child with a temperature of 101 who is abnormally quiet with a vacant stare is much sicker than a child with a fever of 104 who is playing and fully engaged in his environment.
- Normal fever convulsions, or febrile seizures, are unlikely to cause brain damage.
- High body temperatures are not more likely to result in febrile seizures compared to lower temperatures.

Reference:
Boyle, Wade, ND and Saine, Andre, ND, Lectures in Natural Hydrotherapy, (East Palestine, OH:Buckeye Naturopathic Press) 1988.