
Kid Care: Supplies

You can be prepared for common childhood symptoms and problems. Start by making a Kid Care Kit of healthcare supplies. When buying and giving medicine, remember there are alternatives for symptom relief. Most symptoms go away without medicine. Teach your child not to expect a medicine to be the answer.

Kid Care Kit

Keeping basic healthcare items on hand saves you time, money, and worry. When putting together your Kid Care Kit, make sure it contains the first-aid supplies listed below, as well as the medicines. It's important to remember that many medicines, even nonprescription ones, have side effects. Learn what the side effects of your medicines are. And always store medicines out of the reach of children.

- Thermometer. Don't use a glass thermometer that contains mercury. They can be dangerous if the glass breaks and the mercury spills out. Always use a digital thermometer when checking your child's temperature. The way you use it will depend on your child's age. See "Fever and children" below.
- Acetaminophen (for fever, pain, or swelling)
- Ibuprofen (don't use ibuprofen in children younger than 6 months old)
- Decongestant (Talk with your child's healthcare provider before giving. Decongestants are not FDA-approved for children under age 4.)
- Antihistamine (talk with your child's provider before giving)
- Adhesive bandages
- Antiseptic wipes
- Gauze pads
- Antibiotic ointment
- Scissors
- Tweezers
- Insect repellent (to protect against insects and ticks)
- Ice bag or instant cold packs
- Sunblock
- Ichthammol ointment or black drawing salve for splinters
- Hydrocortisone cream
- Feminine hygiene supplies
- Epinephrine injector if someone in your family has severe allergies or anaphylaxis
- Extra home medicines that are taken regularly

- Clean towel
- Ace bandage
- Plastic bag that seals at the top
- Sports drink
- CPR breathing barrier
- Space blanket
- Flashlight
- First-aid instruction book

Aspirin warning

Don't give aspirin (or medicine that contains aspirin) to a child younger than age 19 unless directed by your child's provider. Taking aspirin can put your child at risk for Reye syndrome. This is a rare but very serious disorder. It most often affects the brain and the liver.

Fever and children

Use a digital thermometer to check your child's temperature. Don't use a mercury thermometer. There are different kinds and uses of digital thermometers. They include:

- **Rectal.** For children younger than 3 years, a rectal temperature is the most accurate.
- **Forehead (temporal).** This works for children age 3 months and older. If a child under 3 months old has signs of illness, this can be used for a first pass. The provider may want to confirm with a rectal temperature.
- **Ear (tympanic).** Ear temperatures are accurate after 6 months of age, but not before.
- **Armpit (axillary).** This is the least reliable but may be used for a first pass to check a child of any age with signs of illness. The provider may want to confirm with a rectal temperature.
- **Mouth (oral).** Don't use a thermometer in your child's mouth until they are at least 4 years old.

Use a rectal thermometer with care. Follow the product maker's directions for correct use. Insert it gently. Label it and make sure it's not used in the mouth. It may pass on germs from the stool. If you don't feel OK using a rectal thermometer, ask the healthcare provider what type to use instead. When you talk with any healthcare provider about your child's fever, tell them which type you used.

Below is when to call the healthcare provider if your child has a fever. Your child's healthcare provider may give you different numbers. Follow their instructions.

When to call a healthcare provider about your child's fever

For a baby under 3 months old:

- First, ask your child's healthcare provider how you should take the temperature.

- Rectal or forehead: 100.4°F (38°C) or higher
- Armpit: 99°F (37.2°C) or higher
- A fever of _____ as advised by the provider

For a child age 3 months to 36 months (3 years):

- Rectal or forehead: 102°F (38.9°C) or higher
- Ear (only for use over age 6 months): 102°F (38.9°C) or higher
- A fever of _____ as advised by the provider

In these cases:

- Armpit temperature of 103°F (39.4°C) or higher in a child of any age
- Temperature of 104°F (40°C) or higher in a child of any age
- A fever of _____ as advised by the provider