

Having a high temperature can be a sweaty, nauseous, and all-around uncomfortable experience. But when does it really get life-threatening, and how do you know when it's time to seek help? While most fevers are not dangerous, some may pose a serious threat to your health, and it's important to be able to identify them when they strike.

Read on to find out answers to all your most burning questions about what to do when you have a fever.

What Is Considered A Fever?

The average temperature of the body usually sits at 98.6°F or 37°C. If your temperature is at 100.4° F (38° C) or higher, you have a fever. You're likely to also experience symptoms like sweating, chills, headache, muscle aches, and fatigue.

Note that fevers are not considered an illness in itself, but rather a symptom of an illness. They occur when the hypothalamus, a key brain structure, elevates the body's thermostat in response to something foreign in the immune system. The fever is actually a defense strategy and is a sign that the body is hard at work fighting off infection.

Most fevers will pass on their own in a few days, left untreated or with over-the-counter medications. Some situations, however, do warrant medical attention.



What Are The Most Common Causes Of Fevers?

Fevers can be caused by a number of different illnesses and conditions. They are often the result of common viruses and bacterial infections like colds or stomach bugs. They can also be brought on by infections in the ears, throat, lungs, bladder, kidney, and skin, as well as by heat exhaustion.

The use of certain medications, antibiotics, or immunizations may also be responsible for experiencing fever. Rarely, a malignant tumor may be the culprit.

When Is It Time To See A Doctor For A Fever?

For adults, if your [measured temperature](#) is 103 F (39.4 C) or higher, it's time to see a doctor. Seek medical attention immediately if you experience severe headaches, an unusual skin rash, unusual sensitivity to bright light, mental confusion, persistent vomiting, difficulty breathing, chest pain, and convulsions or seizures. Pain when urinating, or stiffness and pain in the neck when inclining your head, are also cause for alarm. These symptoms all qualify your fever as a serious medical emergency.

Other cases may not need immediate attention but should still be examined by a doctor. Consult a doctor if your fever lasts over 48 hours, or is accompanied by a headache and sore throat for more than 48 hours. Diarrhea or vomiting that lasts over 12 hours or is bloody also warrants a trip to the doctor's office. Night sweats, swollen lymph nodes, earache, and coughing that produces green, yellow, or bloody mucus also suggest that your fever could be a sign of something serious.

Do not hesitate to call for help if needed, and trust your doctor to treat the fever and its side effects.

For more information about how to take active care of your health, [visit us online today](#).