

Fevers

NB: The material for this chapter is drawn from The Complete Homeopathy Handbook by Miranda Castro, published by Macmillan in 1990.

It is important to understand the need of the human body to throw up a fever. Fevers should be seen as allies not enemies: they are a symptom of disease, a sign of disorder - not a disease in themselves. Because of this, they can be useful indicators that the body is fighting infection.

Fever is an important part of the healing process. During fever all the healing reactions of the body are speeded up: the heart beats faster carrying the blood more quickly to all organs; respiration is more active, so increasing the intake of oxygen; perspiration is heavier, allowing the body to discharge toxic waste through the skin and also to cool down more naturally.

A high temperature indicates that the body's defence mechanism is waging war against disorder, and variations in temperature show HOW the body is coping. Attempts to suppress or control the fever with aspirin or antipyretics are likely to oppose the body's natural efforts to heal itself.

A fever is basically a necessary and helpful function of the body, whether contracted in childhood or in adult life. Some people throw up fevers more easily than others.

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

Most importantly, don't panic.

Be guided by the patient. Find out what their needs are, and do what you can to supply them.

Discourage eating and offer only simple drinks: water, lemon-and-honey, diluted natural fruit juices (warm or cold). For a baby that is still nursing, breast milk is fine, and is probably all that will be wanted. A small child with a fever will often not want to eat: this is a good and healthy sign.

By not eating, the body is provoked into eliminating further toxic waste than usual, which helps it to focus its energy on mending itself rather than ingesting and processing food. If the patient does need food, then make sure it is simple and light. Vegetable soups and raw or stewed fruit (with honey rather than sugar) are ideal.

Once the fever has abated and the appetite has returned, the patient should continue for a day or two with nutritious foods that are easy to digest.

You may feel concerned if body temperature rises above 103 degrees Fahrenheit. If the patient FEELS hot and sweaty and requires relief, then you can sponge them with tepid water. Do this by exposing one limb at a time and sponging it until it feels cool, then drying it and replacing it under the covers before moving on to the next limb. This should reduce body temperature by about 2 degrees. The whole process can be repeated as necessary.

Simply sponging the face and forehead can help. A cool bath can benefit, as long as the patient is not too ill. Some mothers dunk their children in a tepid bath when they run up fevers.

SIGNS TO WATCH FOR

Absence of thirst. If the patient is thirstless, this might indicate dehydration, especially if the fever has lasted several days during which few liquids had been taken in (or constantly

expelled if there has been much vomiting). It is essential for anyone running a high temperature over a period of time to keep drinking - even if only in small sips, as long as they are at frequent intervals.

Convulsions. A doctor must be contacted immediately, and the patient should be sponged down in the way described above.

If you suspect Meningitis (high fever, prolonged crying, stiff neck, rash, sensitivity to light) - seek urgent medical help. See separate pages on Hib and Meningitis.

In all cases where you feel uncertain, you should seek professional advice. If you have a feeling inside of what you should do, then follow this sense. It will guide you: rely on it.

TAKING TEMPERATURE

The average normal body temperature of a healthy human being is 98.4 degrees Fahrenheit (37 degrees Celsius), but it can vary between 98 and 99 degrees from individual to individual. Most people (children included) can hold a fever with temperatures up to 104 degrees for short periods (i.e., a few days) with no danger.

Fevers tend to peak towards night-time and drop by the following morning. A temperature of 104 degrees registered one evening may well recur on subsequent evenings - the drop in temperature between times not necessarily implying that the fever is on its way out. The temperature may rise and fall several times before eventually dropping back to normal.

The main reason why fevers are conventionally suppressed (see separate pages on Calpol® & Nurofen®) is because on rare occasions they can provoke more anxious conditions. The rise in temperature associated with fever can be dangerous for a child with a history of convulsions.

No homeopathic remedy should be given simply to reduce temperature in fever. As long as the patient is not in distress then no remedies should be given.

Generally, no homeopathic remedy should be given on the basis of a single symptom, even fever. The body is essentially wise and has great potential for self-healing. They should be given only when truly needed and well-indicated. Undergoing fevers and infections are ways that our bodies correct imbalances and recover a state of GOOD health. Homeopathy can be used to assist this.

Each person will experience fever differently, according to the disease they suffer from. Symptoms will also vary according to individual patterns of illness. For example, one person may feel HOT with a high fever while another feels CHILLY. The chilly person may be irritable and intolerant of disturbance, while another may ache all over, feeling restless and not knowing what to do with themselves. Yet another may sweat profusely, have a great thirst and experience mild delirium. Some people will want company, while others will want to be alone.

There are some fever situations when the use of a homeopathic remedy is helpful. The fever may be only one of a number of symptoms - the patient may be suffering from (say) earache, teething pain, diarrhoea, fretfulness AND fever. It is appropriate for a remedy to be prescribed when it matches all the symptoms of the case. If fever is the first symptom to arise, then it is necessary to wait for other symptoms to arise before a remedy can be selected. In the meantime, the fever should be contained using the methods outlined in this leaflet.

If you are contacting your homeopath to report the development of a fever, it is important to note any other distinguishing symptoms that may be present, and detail these as accurately as you can.

CONCLUSION

Fundamentally, fevers should be encouraged as they are an indication of high vitality. Other things being equal, a high temperature usually means MORE vitality rather than less.

Hippocrates said: “Give me a fever and I can cure a child”. A child who is low in vitality may go through an illness in a long lingering manner - never very ill, but not getting better either. Another child whose temperature soars seems to warrant more concern; but not for long. On recovery, they will seem to have benefited from the illness, and be fitter than ever before.

A fever is a healthy response to an infection, and if allowed to proceed naturally will bring about a rapid cure.

If in doubt, seek professional advice.

ABC 30c

There are many homeopathic remedies which may fit your child’s feverish symptom picture, so it is best to seek professional help. However, there is a very useful combination remedy of *Aconite* + *Belladonna* + *Chamomilla* (ABC) which you can use for your child’s cold/cough, teething problems, ear aches and sore throats. Use ABC in a 30c potency: one dose as required, up to six doses in 24 hours. If the fever continues, or you are very concerned for your child, seek medical help.