Fever of Unknown Origin

Fever of "unknown origin" is a fever of at least 101° F (38.3° C) or greater, and that has gone on daily for three weeks. It is a fever which has a hidden cause. Fever is a higher-than-normal body temperature. Normal temperature is usually defined as 98.6° F or 37° C. Fever is a symptom, not a disease. A fever may mean that there is something else going on in the body that is causing it.

SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

The signs and symptoms of a fever depend on the cause. At first, a fever can cause a chill. When the brain raises the body's "thermostat," the body responds by shivering to raise the temperature. Shivering produces heat in the body. Once the temperature goes up, the person often feels warm. When the fever goes away, the person may start to sweat.

CAUSES OF FEVER

Fever can be caused by many conditions, including:

- Infections.
- Tumors (cancers).
- Tissue injuries.
- Medicines.
- Different diseases.
- Being in hot surroundings.

DIAGNOSIS

There can be many causes of fever. Sometimes, the reason can be very difficult to find. Your caregiver may have to do numerous tests to track down the reason.

TREATMENT

- Medication may be used to control fever.
- **Do not** use aspirin with children because of the association with Reye's syndrome.
- If an infection is suspected to be causing the fever and medications have been prescribed, take them as directed. Finish the full course of medications until they are gone.
- Sponging or bathing in lukewarm water can cool the skin and reduce body temperature. Very cool water may cause shivering and raise the body temperature.
- **Do not** over-bundle children in blankets or heavy clothes when they are running a fever.

SEEK IMMEDIATE MEDICAL CARE IF:

- You are, or your child is unable to keep fluids down.
- Vomiting or diarrhea develop or are present and become persistent (continued).
- There is excessive weakness, dizziness, fainting or extreme thirst.
- Checking weight 2 to 3 times per day in babies and children will help make sure that fluid replacement is adequate to prevent dehydration. Your caregiver will tell you what loss should concern you or suggest another visit to your caregiver.
- Weigh yourself or your child today. Compare this to your home scale and record all weights, times and dates weighed. Try to check weight at the same time every day. Bring this information to your caregiver if you or your child needs to be seen again.
- An unexplained oral temperature above 102.0° F (38.9º C) develops.

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