

Fever in a child under 5

If your child has a fever you may wish to use the traffic light table below to help you determine how serious it is, and the most sensible action to take.

Things can rapidly change with children. You may need to change the plan. If in doubt call 111 or the surgery.

Traffic light assessment table of the risk of serious illness (adapted from the NICE Guideline)

	GREEN	AMBER	RED
	Manage at home or call for advice if any concerns	Any amber signs see or call the same day	High risk – Any red signs call 999 for an ambulance
Colour – skin, lips or tongue	Normal	Pale	Blue/mottled/very pale/purple/ashen
Activity	Strong normal cry/not crying Content/smiles Responds to normal interaction Stays awake or easy to wake	Not responding to normal social cues No smile Sleeping a lot Decreased activity Grizzly	No response to social cues Appears ill to healthcare professional Unarousable or very drowsy Floppy Weak, high – pitched cry
Breathing		Nostril flaring Fast breathing Crackly sounding	Grunting Panting Chest indrawing

		Breathing or wheeze	Base of neck tugging Struggling to breath Exhausted
Hydration	Normal skin and eyes Wet mouth and lips	Fast heart rate Dry mouth and lips Poor feeding in babies Dry nappies or not passing much urine	Sunken eyes Pale and blue fingers and toes Dry mouth Pounding heart rate Not feeding Not passing water
Other	None of the amber or red signs	Age 3-6m temperature 39 degrees C or more Fever for 5 or more days Shakes/shivers	Age 3 months and temperature 38 degrees C or more Glass test positive rash Bulging fontanelle
		Arm or leg or joint swelling Not walking properly or using their arm or leg properly	Neck is stiff Fits Weakness one or other side or in the face
	LOW RISK HOME +/- telephone advice	IMMEDIATE RISK GP	HIGH RISK HOSPITAL

