Fever, Vomiting and Diarrhea

Description/Introduction

Fever, vomiting and diarrhea are common in children. There are lots of reasons children may have a fever, vomiting and diarrhea; for example, they may have picked up some germs somewhere, caught a virus or ate something they shouldn’t have. Fortunately, for these illnesses, there are specific care steps you can follow.

FEVER

What to Look For

In an infant:
- Upset or fussy
- Not active
- Quiet
- Feels warm or hot
- Feels hot to the touch
- Complains of being cold or chilled and having body aches
- Complains of having a headache
- Crying
- Breathing rapidly
- Not eating or sleeping according to habits
- Has trouble sleeping or sleeps more than usual
- Appears to be drowsy
- Is not hungry

Care for a Fever

- Check the child or infant.
- Comfort the child or infant that you are going to help.
- Take the child’s or infant’s temperature.
- Call the parents and follow their instructions.
- Make the child or infant as comfortable as possible and have him or her rest.
- Be sure the child or infant is not overdressed; a single layer of clothing and a light blanket are recommended.

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Care for a Fever (continued)

- Encourage the child or infant to drink clear fluids that the parent has approved, such as water, juice or chicken soup, to prevent dehydration.
- Follow the parents’ instructions on whether and what medications to give the child to bring the fever down.
- Closely watch the child or infant for signs of life-threatening conditions, such as shock, unconsciousness or trouble breathing, and call 9-1-1 or the local emergency number if necessary.

VOMITING

Care for Vomiting

If a child or infant is vomiting:

- Hold the child over a bowl while supporting his or her upper body.
- Comfort and reassure him or her.

After the child finishes vomiting:

- Clean the child’s mouth and face with a damp cloth.
- Lay the child or infant on his or her side and have the child rest quietly. Make sure a clean bowl is nearby in case of more vomiting.
- Call the parents and follow their instructions. They may have specific instructions for reintroducing liquids or foods to the child.

DIARRHEA

Care for Diarrhea

- Call the parents and follow their instructions. They may have specific instructions for rehydrating the child or reintroducing foods.