

Indian Academy of Pediatrics (IAP)



GUIDELINES FOR PARENTS

My Child has a Fever with Rash

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10 FAQs on MY CHILD HAS A FEVER WITH RASH

1. Why do children get rashes and how common are they?
2. My 1-year-old baby has developed rashes (red spots) along with fever. What should I do?
3. How do I know my baby has measles?
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My Child has a Fever with Rash

Q1

Why do children get rashes and how common are they?

Rashes caused by viruses are very common in children and babies. Most viral rashes are harmless and will go away on their own. If your child has a fever and a rash that does not turn white (blanch) when pressed or they are very unwell, seek advice of your doctor.

Q2

My 1-year-old baby has developed rashes (red spots) along with fever. What should I do?

It is common for babies to get rashes with fever. Majority of times, they are simple viral rashes. Rashes caused by viral infections may cause reddish or pink spots over large parts of the body, such as the chest and back. Many viral rashes do not itch. They will go off without causing any problem.

When to consult the doctor?

Along with rash if fever persists >2–3 days, baby looks unwell, or if your gut feeling says there is something wrong, consult immediately. If you think, your baby has measles consult immediately.

Q3

How do I know my baby has measles?

Usually in all viral rashes, fever will decrease in intensity or disappear as rash appears. But, in measles, the fever will rise (very high) along with runny eyes, runny nose and disturbing cough and the rash appears after 3 days on the face and behind the ears and spreads all over the body from face to trunk to extremities.

As rash is appearing and child looks unwell and the fever breaks once the rash is spread all over the body.

Q4

How does the rash in chickenpox look like?

The rash of chickenpox begins as many small red bumps that look-like pimples or insect bites. They appear in clusters over 2–4 days, then develop into thin-walled blisters filled with fluid. The blister walls break, leaving open sores, which finally crust over to become dry and brown scabs.

When to consult the doctor?

If you are not sure about diagnosis, else if fever is >2–3 days, or if blisters are looking angry, ruptured, surrounding area red, warm, and painful. They become increasingly unwell or very drowsy.

Q5

My child is 5 years old, he has fever, throat pain, and rash. Should I consult?

If your child is having fever, throat pain, and difficult in swallowing and rash is red, rough, and sandpaper like, it could be scarlet fever. Needs a consult with doctor.

Q6

My friend's daughter with rash on elbows that looked-like chickenpox was diagnosed with hand-foot-mouth disease (HFMD)? What care do we need to take for HFMD?

Hand-foot-mouth disease (HFMD) is common nowadays. The child has fever for a day, and next day baby has drooling along with red spots or blisters in the palms, soles, buttocks, and inside or around the mouth. Just give paracetamol for fever and pain relief, adequate fluids to prevent dehydration. It will settle over a week's time.

What is care for HFMD?

Wash your hands thoroughly after touching your child's blisters, wiping their nose, and changing nappies or helping with toileting. Do not send the child to school or play with other kids until all the fluid in their blisters has dried. Allow the blisters to dry naturally. Do not pierce or squeeze them. HFMD is a viral infection that rarely causes further complications. Antibiotics do not work on viruses and are not given to children with HFMD. HFMD will get better on its own, but there are ways you can care for your child at home.

Q7

What should I do for simple viral rashes?

- (1) Give paracetamol for fever or for discomfort;
- (2) Antibiotics do not work on viruses and are not given to children with rashes caused by viral infections;
- (3) Adequate rest and fluids to keep them well hydrated during a fever.

Q8

Doctor, I am worried about itching and secondary infection of chickenpox! Kindly advise.

Chickenpox rash usually itches—can be comforted with calamine lotion or another soothing treatment, dress your child in loose-fitting clothes, keep the area covered and trim the nails to help prevent your child from scratching open the area, which can lead to infection.

Q9

Can I prevent my child getting such febrile viral rashes?

Some viral rashes can be prevented through vaccinations but not for all. Have your child immunized against diseases for which there are vaccinations, such as measles, rubella, and chickenpox. Be vigilant about hygiene. Wash your own hands and your child's hands frequently.

Q10

When can I send my child to baby sitting or to school?

The conditions that cause viral rashes are contagious, so it is also important to keep your child home from childcare facilities or other activities where they will be around other kids until they have made a full recovery.