

With cold season in full swing and flu season rapidly approaching, this leaves many parents wondering “When should I bring my child in to be seen by the pediatrician?” Here are a few guidelines based on questions we often hear to help you decide.

- My child has fever.
 - o Fever is anything over 100.4F; anything below this considered normal variant of your child’s temperature. Second, remember it is common for children to get fever in the first few days of a viral illness. Typically if children run fever for more than 48 hours, we would like to see them in the office. Conversely, if your child has had cold symptoms and then develops a fever at the end of the illness, this could be the sign of a secondary infection; therefore we typically want to see you then as well.
 - o You can treat fevers with acetaminophen every 4-6 hours and/or ibuprofen for children over 6 months every 6-8 hours.
 - If you choose to alternate acetaminophen and ibuprofen, the easiest way to do so is alternate every 3 hours one or the other. For example, if you give acetaminophen at noon, you can give ibuprofen at 3 and acetaminophen again at 6, which put 6 hours between every acetaminophen dose and 6 hours between every ibuprofen dose.
 - o Many parents also ask what is a “scary temperature?” Children can run high fevers! The two situations to worry about are:
 - If the child’s temperature does not go down after acetaminophen or ibuprofen
 - Your child’s temperature is spiking over 105.0F
- My child has cough and runny nose.
 - o You may feel like your child always has cough and runny nose, but rest assured most of the time this is just a mild virus! We expect children to get 8-10 colds a year, with each one lasting anywhere from 10 days to 2 weeks. If you think about it that way, your child may have a cold for close to 4 or 5 months out of the year!
 - o The best thing you can do for your child is treat them symptomatically. Saline nose drops help the runny nose significantly as well as a post nasal drip cough. Start a cool mist humidifier in their room.
 - o Cough medications are generally not recommended for children. If your child is older than a year of age you can try natural cough syrups when the main ingredient is honey.
- My child is vomiting and/or diarrhea.
 - o Often vomiting and diarrhea is a self limited infection. The most important thing to remember is to keep your child well hydrated! If they don’t want to eat anything during this illness, that is okay, just be sure to push fluids! Your child may be extremely thirsty, but do not let them drain 8 oz of fluids at once as this may stimulate your child to vomit again. We recommend taking small sips more frequently – even if this means 1 tsp every couple minutes. As long as your child is producing tears and urinating at least 4 times in a day they are adequately hydrated.
 - o When to come in for vomiting or diarrhea:
 - Blood or bile (green in color) in vomit
 - Unable to keep anything down
 - Unable to stay well hydrated
 - High spiking fever with vomit
 - Severe stomach pains

These are just general guidelines, so when in doubt don’t hesitate to ask or bring your child in!