6. *Fever after immunization injections:* Do not worry if you child is a bit feverish after getting his/her jabs. It is normal for your baby to be a bit unsettled and feverish for a few days after an immunization shot, and your baby's doctor/nurse will warn you about this beforehand.

When should I seek medical attention from the docto?

1. *If you are very worried about your baby's health :* Parents are the best judges of a baby's health. If you feel that your child is seriously ill, do not delay and immediately seek help, even if the symptoms your baby has are minor. If you are worried, call the doctor!
2. *A very high temperature:* If your baby has an unusually high temperature or a temperature that persists even after a day or two, then it would be advisable to seek medical help. A temperature of 39 degree Celsius or greater should ring alarm bells in your head; never delay taking your child to the paediatrician if your child suffers for such high a temperature.
3. *A new rash:* Nappy rashes are extremely common and do not require medical assessment. Just use a good nappy rash cream, keep the nappy edge areas of your baby's groin well moisturized and make sure you change your baby's nappy frequently. Some rashes, however, can be serious, especially those that have suddenly appeared in your baby's body. Always test a new rash on your child's body with a drinking glass; a harmless rash will disappear when you press a drinking glass against it, but if the rash does not fade even after pressing with a glass, your child could be suffering from meningitis. Meningitis is a serious illness and requires urgent medical help. A rash that is purplish in colour and does not fade when a glass is pressed against it is a sign of meningitis.
4. *Difficulty in breathing:* If your baby is showing signs of difficulty breathing, seek medical help immediately. Signs of breathing difficulty are wheezy sounds coming from the chest, a tired baby, a bluish tinge around the lips and nails, nasal flaring and reduced chest movements.
5. *A floppy and unresponsive baby:* Go to your nearest emergency department without delay. Causes of a baby becoming lifeless, floppy and unresponsive are usually secondary to dehydration, meningitis or other serious medical conditions. In such a situation, each second is precious for the baby's life, and the faster the baby is seen by a doctor, the better the baby's chances of getting better.

Learn to measure your baby' temperature accurately

The average normal body temperature in a baby's ear or mouth is 37 degree Celsius when measured using a thermometer. However, your baby may have a temperature slightly higher or lower than this, which is entirely normal. The temperature taken under the armpit is normally 0.5 degree lower than the temperature taken from the mouth.

A high temperature is classified as one that is greater than 37.8 degrees (when taken in the ear or mouth) or more than 37.3 degrees (when taken under the arm).

The best thermometer to use for your child is a digital thermometer, which displays your baby's temperature in a digital display and takes around 10 seconds to give you an accurate reading. Try not to use a mercury thermometer, as it may break inside the ear or your child might bite on it if you are taking the temperature through the mouth. Please note that if you child has been lying on a pillow, it can warm his/her ears, so wait for at least 5 minutes for the ears to cool down if you wish to take the temperature through the ear.

If you don't have a thermometer, you can assess your child's body temperature by checking the back of your baby's neck using your hand or lips. Studies have shown that a mother's lips are very sensitive to her child's temperature and can correctly detect a high temperature correctly 75% of the time just by kissing her baby's neck!

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Finally, a quick checklist to help you set up your own special medical cabinet to treat any minor illnesses and accidents you child may suffer from in the future. Remember that all medications should be kept well out of children's reach.

1. A thermometer (to keep an eye on your baby's temperature)
2. A measuring spoon (to measure medicine volumes)
3. Plasters (for cuts and grazes)
4. Antiseptic cream (to disinfect open injuries)
5. Nappy cream (for nappy rashes)
6. Scissors, bandage, surgical tape
7. Decongestant drops (to help open the airways during colds)
8. Teething gel (to help relieve the pain when your baby starts teething)
9. Cough Syrup for children (please ensure that the syrup is safe to be used for your baby/child)
10. Paracetamol suspension for children (to treat fevers; please ensure that the syrup is safe to be used for your baby/child)

As a parent, nobody understands your child better than you do, so if you are worried about your child's symptoms, always consult your child's doctor without delay. A confident parent is a good parent, so trust your own judgement when your child is ill. The knowledge that you have gained from this article should hopefully help you make decisions about your child with greater confidence and identify the alarm signs that necessitate medical help. Happy parenting!

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