

Managing fever of children

PROF DR M KARIM KHAN

Fever is the commonest symptom (about 41 percent) for which parents bring their children to the physicians. Fever always brings tension in parents' mind and sometimes they become puzzled if temperature is high (more than 102-104 degree Fahrenheit), especially when fever persists for more than 3-4 days and/or associated with convulsion.

Rectal thermometer reading is the best to assess core temperature of the body; it is 0.5 degree higher than that of oral temperature and 0.8 degree higher than that of axillary temperature.

In most cases, fever indicates presence of some infections somewhere in the body. The cause may be viral, bacterial, protozoal, rickettsial etc. Sometimes a cause may not be identified. Fever with convulsion always creates panic situation which needs to be evaluated.

Managing fever, physicians in private settings tend to adopt strategies involving less diag-



nostic testing or empiric treatment, whereas hospital-based physicians are most likely to test and treat.

The appropriate management of feverish infants has been debated. The fact is that — fever does not necessarily need to be treated. For example, if a child is playful, comfortable, able to sleep and drinking plenty of fluids, then medical treatment is not likely to be needed. On the

other hand, steps should be taken to decrease fever in a child who is uncomfortable, dehydrated, vomiting, having difficulty sleeping. All febrile children less than 36 months of age and toxic appearing should be hospitalised for evaluation and treatment of possible sepsis or meningitis.

Control of fever is a major issue for physicians caring for children. The World Health

Organisation (WHO) recommends in the guidelines for standard acute fever management that treatment with Paracetamol in children 2 months up to 5 years of age should be limited to those with high fever (rectal temperature 39° C or above). Supportive care with additional fluids, appropriate clothing and environmental conditions should be emphasised.

We advise mothers to remove clothing of the children having high temperature; tap water sponging is the best way to reduce increased body temperature. If it fails after sponging, administration of syrup Paracetamol is recommended consulting a paediatrician.

Sometimes at the peak of temperature, children vomit or refuses to take any oral medication. In those cases Paracetamol suppository can be used. If fever does not subside within 3-4 days, evaluation of the cause of fever need to be done. Travel history is important. Then physical examination and occasionally laboratory examination are needed.

So when your child is having fever, do not get scared and do not promptly go for medicine. Take time and observe carefully at home. Follow the recommendations to reduce temperature. Take care of your baby.

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MEDICAL BREAKTHROUGH



The replacement windpipe seen in the photo was grown in the lab.

First synthetic organ transplant

Surgeons in Sweden have carried out the world's first synthetic organ transplant. Scientists in London created an artificial windpipe which was then coated in stem cells from the patient.

The windpipe is a synthetic one. The beauty of this is — you can have it immediately; there is no delay. This technique does not rely on a human donation and there is no risk of the organ being rejected.

The 36-year-old cancer patient is doing well a month after the operation. Professor Paolo Macchiarini from Italy led the pioneering surgery, which took place at the Karolinska University Hospital.

The key to the latest technique is modelling a structure or scaffold that is an exact replica of the patient's own windpipe, removing the need for a donor organ.

Source: BBC Health

HEALTH bulletin



Brisk walks fight prostate cancer

Men who have been recently diagnosed with prostate cancer can help keep their disease at bay by taking brisk walks, claim researchers. Based on their observations, men who power walk for at least three hours a week can halve how much their cancer will grow and spread over the next couple of years.

Non-invasive way to screen genetic abnormality in embryo

Fertility doctors claim that they have found a non-invasive way to screen IVF embryos for genetic abnormalities like Down's syndrome. The current method involves taking cells from the embryo itself, which experts fear may be harmful. Now UK researchers say that it is possible to run the same checks on cells surrounding the fertilised egg that are normally thrown away.

Medicine in water supply: An emerging concern

DR MD RAJIB HOSSAIN

While millions of people in the world are struggling to access safe drinking water, drugs contamination in the supply water has been emerging as a rising concern.

More than 100 different types of medicine have been detected in lakes, rivers, reservoirs and streams throughout the world — Asia, Australia, Canada, Europe, USA — even in Swiss lakes and the North Sea.

The concentrations of prescription drugs and over the counter drugs in the water supply are very low and far below the levels of a medical dose. But the presence of so many drugs in drinking water is heightening worries among scientists for long-term consequences to human health.

According to World Health Organisation (WHO), medicine can be introduced into water sources through sewage, which carries the excreta of individuals and patients who have used these chemotherapeutic agents, from uncontrolled drug disposal (e.g. discarding expired drugs into toilets) and from agricultural runoff comprising livestock manure. Most tap water is not treated in a way that can get out pharmaceutical drugs or if treated they do not remove all drug residue.



Drugs in the drinking water

Tests have detected minute concentrations of pharmaceuticals in the drinking water supplies of at least 46 million people in two dozen major American metropolitan areas, an Associated Press investigation has found. The federal government does not regulate prescription drugs in water.

Experts are investigating the possible long term health effects of drinking such water. Current observations suggest — it is very unlikely that exposure to very low levels of pharmaceutical products in drinking-water would result in appreciable adverse risks to human health. But it could be an emerging public health problem if the concentration rises and also for wildlife.

The most appropriate approach to minimise the presence of pharmaceutical products in drinking-water and reduce human exposure is to prevent or reduce their entry into water bodies as far as reasonably practical.

According to WHO, concentration of the vast majority of phar-

maceutical drugs into the water bodies can be reduced through natural processes (e.g. adsorption onto sediment, solar photodegradation and biological degradation) or during subsequent drinking-water and wastewater treatment processes.

Conventional water treatment processes, such as chlorination can also reduce the burden half and improved system to treat water will help preventing entry of drugs into water supply chain.

Drugs in drinking water are emerging. We need to act before it evolves as a major public health problem.

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Eating tips for healthy teeth

•Follow a healthy diet and eat plenty of fresh fruits and vegetables. Too many carbohydrate and sugary foods in the diet lead to tooth decay in the long run.

•You should clean your teeth after every meal, at least rinse your mouth to get rid of any sugar or sticky foods that may remain in your mouth.

•Do not eat in between meals. This is because there is maximum bacterial action at acidic pH (acidity measuring index). The pH in the mouth is most acidic immediately after meals. It reduces slowly and reaches a normal level. When you eat in between meals, the acidic level in the mouth does not come down thus leading to increasing bacterial action which in turn leads to caries.

Tips compiled by Dr Kazi Md Niazur Rahman, a dental surgeon working at Dhaka Dental College Hospital. Email: dr.niaz24@gmail.com



Limit sugary foods to prevent tooth decay and maintain oral hygiene, as scientific evidence shows that they contribute the process.

Knowing for better living

In Bangladesh . . .

6.5% of total death occurs due to diabetes !

Control your diabetes

Control your blood pressure

Control your body weight

Avoid smoking

Exercise regularly

Consult your Doctor



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