

## **General Guidance if Your Child is Sick** by Dr. Lawrence Pavelsky, MD

**“Do less, Stimulate less, Speak less, Eat less.”  
“Drink more, Sleep more, Rest more, and Breathe more.”**

- 1) Stop your daily routine and encourage your child, and your family members, to rest.
- 2) Provide a safe and comfortable environment for your child to process the illness.
- 3) Encourage plenty of fluids (water, tea, broth, soup, breast milk). If your child is on formula, you may need to either stop the formula completely, or feed fewer ounces through the illness.
- 4) Turn the volume down.... Reduce activity levels, noise, excitement, schedules, chores, and tasks to a minimum.
- 5) Turn the lights down. Maintain a calm, quiet, peaceful environment for your child’s nervous system to heal.
- 6) Stay indoors; play quiet games. Going outside can be too much of an energetic overload for your child’s body when sick, and may prolong and intensify the stress on his body.
- 7) Give your child a warm bath, several times per day if necessary, and stay with your child as much as possible. Lay low, and watch your child closely. Be mindful of cool or cold drafts when getting out of the bath.
- 8) Regarding supplements, it is best to stop most, if not all of the supplements that your child is taking. You will need to use your judgment in making this decision.
- 9) Do not force your child to eat. When children are sick, or not feeling well, their digestive systems slow down. Food is one of the last things children are interested in when they have a fever or don’t feel well. Just ensure fluid intake, and don’t push foods. Their bodies will tell you when they are ready to start eating again. And, most importantly, *avoid sugar, including juices, flour and dairy products, and fried foods*, when your child is sick, as these foods tend to increase stress, dehydration, and mucus production in the body, which will prolong, or worsen, the course of illness.
- 10) Observe your child for mental status changes (see [Pediatric Checklist](#) below).
- 11) Please remember that the resolution of illness can take some time. The more patience you have, the more closely you observe your child, and the more you efficiently remove the stressors in your child’s environments, the greater you will impact the length of recovery for your child’s illness. Use the [Pediatric Checklist](#), and your intuition, to help you decide when more medical attention is needed.
- 12) You may need to cancel plans, stay home, and not participate in previously planned activities so your child can rest and heal at home in her own comfortable, safe environment. *The most important thing you can do as a parent is to provide your child with a safe environment in which healing can occur.*
- 13) Make the first day your child feels better a slow day. Stay home and rest for the first 24 hours that the symptoms of illness have finally abated. Try not to rush back into the daily routine of life.

## ***Acute Illness:***

Dr. Palevsky often remarks that “children need to be allowed to experience symptoms of acute illness in order for their bodies to appropriately cleanse the wastes and toxins from their systems, and so they can go forward in their lives toward greater optimal health and wellness.” Rarely does Dr. Palevsky ever need to prescribe antibiotics for children in his practice. On average, he writes one antibiotic prescription per year. This is because he has come to understand that most illnesses in children are not caused by infections, and therefore, don’t require antibiotic treatment.

## ***Rethinking Childhood Illness: A New Approach to Keeping Children Healthy.***

In consideration of the philosophy of today's conventional medical practice, and of the beliefs of our current dominant cultural norms, we are taught to view symptoms of acute illnesses in children as something bad and dangerous.

Parents are taught to believe that symptoms and childhood illnesses can and should be avoided, suppressed and stopped at all costs, with the use of over-the-counter medicines, antibiotics, pharmaceutical drugs, and vaccines. Parents are also made to fear the worst-case scenario each time their children get sick, or when they choose not to vaccinate their children.

It is important for all of us to begin learning about new scientific information that explains why children must experience their symptoms and illnesses as a necessary rite of passage, thus, allowing their immune and nervous systems to grow, mature, and develop appropriately. The expression of these symptoms may not always be caused by infections from bacteria and viruses. Instead, these symptoms and illnesses may develop as a sign that our children are healthy; that their bodies are strong, and working to bring to the surface, and cleanse, any accumulation of wastes that are deep inside them, having accumulated due to their exposure to varying stressors in their lives. In many instances, the process of bringing these wastes to the surface of the body is aided *by* the bacteria and viruses already living inside of them, and is a necessary step for them to become well.

Dr. Palevsky feels we are harming children with the constant use of over-the-counter medications, antibiotics, drugs and vaccines that treat and suppress common and necessary childhood symptoms and illnesses. He has come to understand that the use of this dominant treatment approach, that drives wastes deeper into our children's bodies when we suppress symptoms, is directly contributing to the development of many of the chronic childhood illnesses we see in pediatrics today. After all, chronic symptoms develop as a result of a chronic accumulation of wastes and toxins, something we contribute to every time we don’t allow children to have their symptoms.

Dr. Palevsky understands that we can learn what contributes to the excess accumulation of wastes in our children. He recognizes that if we pull the plug on putting inflammatory/irritating materials into our children’s bodies, we would be more successful in avoiding the need for their bodies to develop symptoms in the first place. By pulling the plug on exposing our children to these inflammatory/irritating materials, we would also be reducing their stress, which would allow for their immune and nervous system’s natural ability to eliminate their wastes more easily and safely, without the need for symptoms.

Symptoms develop only to restore homeostasis in our bodies; when the load of materials coming into our children’s bodies is greater than their natural ability to eliminate the wastes that develop as a byproduct of their exposures to that load. By recognizing the factors that contribute to the development of these wastes, and by minimizing the input of information into children at the times they are acutely ill, their symptoms will resolve faster.

In a nutshell, Dr. Palevsky has come to realize our need to facilitate the resolution of our children's symptoms without suppressing them, while taking another look at how valuable childhood illnesses can be to the growth and development of our children. Children need to be allowed to be sick, in order for them to get well. It’s up to the adults in children’s lives to provide a safe space (home, school, food, environment, emotions, spirit, schedules) for them to grow and develop when they are well so they don’t get sick. Dr. Palevsky recommends that parents make a mindful return to providing this same safe space for their children when they do get sick, so they can resolve their symptoms and heal properly.

### **General Guidance for Fever:**

Do all of the above and:

- 1) Fever is an important part of how children's bodies remove wastes and toxins. The immune chemicals that produce the symptoms of fever are always present and active in our bodies, on a day-to-day basis, even when we don't have an elevated body temperature. They serve us by getting rid of the wastes and toxins we accumulate from our daily activities so that we don't require an elevation in our body temperature to burn them out. The immune chemicals that cause fever don't just magically appear in our bodies when we develop a fever. They circulate in our bodies all the time to help us stay well by keeping our body temperature stable, and by maintaining homeostasis in our cells, tissues and organs. Fever develops when these immune chemicals become up-regulated and amplified in our bodies, when the amount of wastes and toxins increases in our systems to a greater extent than what our bodies are capable of removing on a day-to-day basis through the normal processes of elimination: stooling, urinating, breathing, sweating, resting and sleeping.
- 2) The accumulation of wastes in our bodies occurs due to 1) poor food choices and overfeeding through food and nervous system stimulation, 2) increased stress from chaotic schedules and home environments, 3) poor sleep patterns, 4) lack of down time and proper rest, 5) difficulties at new schools, or at school in general, 6) emotional upsets and unsafe environments, 7) environmental air, food, water, skin and nervous system toxic exposures, 8) frequent use of over-the-counter and pharmaceutical medicines, and vaccines, 9) pushing ahead with our lives and not listening to the messages our bodies are giving us, and 10) living a life that's opposite to the cycles of nature (e.g., animals hibernate in the winter, and humans in the northern hemisphere keep a schedule as if it's still summer time). *The keeping of a diet and lifestyle in opposition to the laws of nature is a drastic set up for waste and toxin build-up in our bodies, leading to an increase in the chemicals that produce fever, and resultant symptoms of flu, cough, illness, depression, stomach upset, etc.* Therefore, **fever is something our bodies use to help us get well.** Fever forces us to stop what we're doing and pay attention to what our bodies need most in order to become more optimally well.
- 3) Focus your attention on treating your child who has an elevated temperature, and try not to focus primarily on the number on the thermometer. Stay with your child. See the [Pediatric Checklist](#) below.
- 4) Give your child a warm bath, several times per day if necessary, to help her sweat. *Sweating will help cool your child's body, and make your child feel better.* You can use epsom salts, baking soda, or even hydrogen peroxide in the bath, to support your child in feeling more comfortable during the fever. Be mindful of cool drafts after coming out of a warm bath that can compromise your child's health. You can also use lavender flowers, yarrow flowers, or elder flowers in the bath to promote healing and relaxation.
- 5) Fever does not cause brain damage, and is not automatically going to lead to a seizure in your child. [http://www.nytimes.com/2011/01/11/health/11klass.html?\\_r=2&ref=health](http://www.nytimes.com/2011/01/11/health/11klass.html?_r=2&ref=health)
- 6) To help your child feel better with the symptoms of fever, use one drop of lavender or German chamomile essential oil rubbed undiluted on the tops of both ears, and in the space between the largest vertebrae in the base of their neck and the vertebrae below it. It is also therapeutic to massage the oil down the spine, and place a drop or two on the center of the pads of both big toes. You can do this several times per day on these acupuncture points to help their bodies cope better with the chemistry of the fever.
- 7) Use the wet sock treatment after the warm bath: put a pair of wet, cool, cotton socks on your child's feet, followed by a pair of dry, wool socks, and put your child to bed. Dr. Palevsky thanks his naturopathic physician colleagues for this smart therapeutic intervention. Many parents report how much it helps to improve their children's symptoms of fever and upper respiratory issues.
- 8) Make sure your child drinks as much fluids as possible, and check that the urine is clear to slightly yellow in color. Dehydration in children with fever will make your child feel worse and compromise her ability to heal.
- 9) Refer to the list of resources below for other remedies to help support your child through the fever.
- 10) Continue to observe your child for mental status changes (see [Pediatric Checklist](#) below).
- 11) Dr. Palevsky does not recommend the use of over-the-counter medicine for fever reduction. He does not believe these medicines are safe for human consumption, and there is growing literature to support his position (see below: Resources). He also understands that most often the fever becomes prolonged in children when these medicines are used. In other words, the fever doesn't last as many days, and goes away quicker, when parents try to refrain from using these medicines.

## ***General Guidance for Fever: Continued***

12) Fever helps the body eliminate wastes. Stopping the fever with these medicines stops children's bodies from eliminating the wastes. But, the body is "smarter" than that, and will continue to rage on with the fever until it is allowed to burn out the wastes... or not. If the wastes aren't eliminated promptly, they hang around and cause more irritation to our children on a chronic basis. Often, children will have a subsequent acute illness accompanied by fever, soon after their initial febrile illness, when the fever is suppressed with over-the-counter medicines.

13) Most over-the-counter medicines use up important immune chemicals in children's bodies (e.g., glutathione) that are needed to deal with the removal of the wastes that caused them to have the fever in the first place. Less glutathione in the body leads to less elimination of wastes and, therefore, more accumulation of wastes in the cells, tissues, and organs of the body. This state of health leads to the need for, and the development of, further episodes of acute illnesses. The body cannot function in an optimal way if these wastes are allowed to accumulate in the body, thus, the reason for further episodes of acute illnesses. With continued use of over-the-counter medicines to suppress the fevers, children will further deplete their glutathione stores, which could eventually increase the potential for them to develop the onset of chronic illnesses.

14) Some over-the-counter medicines also inhibit the production of other immune chemicals (e.g., prostaglandins) that children's bodies need to help them eliminate their wastes. As a by-product of this inhibition, children will produce other irritating chemicals (e.g., thromboxanes and leukotrienes) that have longer lasting inflammatory properties on their health, leading to illnesses that are often worse than what they were originally dealing with when the fever developed in the first place.

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## ***Pediatric Checklist:***

Please consult your physician, or go to the nearest emergency room, if your child is not:

- |   |                                 |
|---|---------------------------------|
| 1) Alert                                      | 8) Able to keep his/her head up |
| 2) Able to be aroused                         | 9) Able to speak                |
| 3) Active                                     | 10) Responsive                  |
| 4) Able to be woken up                        | 11) Interactive                 |
| 5) Drinking fluids                            | 12) Consolable                  |
| 6) Urinating light pale yellow to clear urine | 13) Breathing comfortably       |
| 7) Making eye contact                         |                                 |

If your child is less than 3 months old and has a fever, please go to the nearest emergency room.

If your child has a fever and a rash of little dots under the skin, please go to the nearest emergency room.

If your child has a fever, neck pain and the light is bothering him/her, please go to the nearest emergency room.

If your child has a fever, along with urinary complaints, swollen joints, inability to walk, or other complaints that concern you, please seek immediate medical attention.

If along with your child's cough, your child is having difficulty breathing, is breathing rapidly, is wheezing, has a mental status change (see **Pediatric Checklist**), or is an infant below 4 months of age with a cough, please seek immediate medical attention.

### **General Guidance for Coughs:**

1) Read **General Guidance if Your Children are Sick**.

2) Coughs are usually a sign that your child is trying to remove waste materials from his body through the airway.

3) Dry coughs are usually the way in which upper respiratory symptoms begin. When a child develops an irritation in the airway, it can arrive at the airway lining from exposure to the irritants in the air that they breathe in, from irritants in the food particles that enter their digestive systems that circulate up to the airway through the bloodstream, or from nervous system stress and/or emotional stress that promote the production of irritating chemicals that try to make their way out through their airways. Nonetheless, the reason a child starts to cough is because she is trying to remove inflammatory/irritating materials from her body through the airway.

4) Over several days to even a week, the cough usually becomes productive. In general, this is a good sign. It means the child is almost finished removing the waste materials from the airway, and the illness is almost over. One of the best ways to advance the healing of the cough is to thin the mucus. This is done by keeping your child well hydrated, and following the directions above about how to feed your child when sick.

5) Our bodies produce mucus to protect the integrity of the mucus membranes (mouth, nose, sinuses, throat, airway, intestines, skin, vaginal canal) by capturing inflammatory/irritating materials before they enter our bloodstream. Mucus is also produced to enhance the removal, out through the mucus membranes of our bodies, of accumulated cell, tissue, and organ system waste products.

6) Increased mucus production occurs when our bodies have been exposed to increasing amounts of inflammatory/irritating materials that make their way into our bodies. Increased mucus production also occurs when increased production of waste materials from inside our bodies is brought to the surface for elimination. The increased mucus production serves as a necessary step to respond to the exposure to these materials, and as a delivery system to clear out the waste materials that made their way into our bodies and need to be eliminated.

7) If you are able to successfully avoid inflammatory/irritating materials from entering into your child's body (see **General Guidance if Your Children are Sick and For Fever**), and work to keep the mucus thin, the symptoms of mucus production and cough will improve greatly.

8) If your child is old enough (usually 5 years or older), try using a neti pot several times per day with non-iodized salt, to help drain out the sinuses. Many coughs are usually caused by post-nasal drip. By cleaning out and draining the sinuses with the warm salt water in the neti pot, much of the cough symptoms will abate using this technique.

9) See [www.gaiaherbs.com](http://www.gaiaherbs.com) for herbal formulas specific for children who have Dry Coughs (<http://www.gaiaherbs.com/products/detail/703/Cough-Syrup-for-Dry-Coughs>) and Wet Coughs (<http://www.gaiaherbs.com/products/detail/702/Cough-Syrup-for-Wet-Coughs>). You might want to have the Warm Vaporous Rub (<http://www.gaiaherbs.com/products/detail/698/Warming-Chest-Rub>) on hand as well. Chest massage, along with good hydration and warm, steam baths, will help move the material out of your child's airways more quickly. You may also try giving your child cooked pears. This food remedy helps to heal the airway of children who have productive, wet coughs.

10) Give your child a chest massage with the Warm Vaporous Rub, or a similar product, across the chest under the collarbones, down the center of the sternum, and down the spine. This type of massage will not only help relieve their cough, but it will also facilitate a bowel movement in your child. Good bowel habits, especially when a child is having upper respiratory and lung symptoms, can aid in the resolution of these upper respiratory and lung symptoms. Thus, the reason for the diet that Dr. Palevsky recommends for a sick child.

11) Use the wet sock treatment as described above in the section on fever, to help alleviate the cough symptoms, as well.

12) If your child has a chronic cough, or asthma, consider evaluating the home for airborne toxins, molds, harsh volatile chemicals, off gassing of paints, chemically treated carpets, furniture, woods, toys, clothes, and wall-paper.

13) Dr. Palevsky is not in favor of humidifiers or vaporizers unless parents can make sure the machines are thoroughly cleaned daily. He prefers the use of steam baths, and the placement of pots of warm/hot water near the radiator or slightly open window.

14) Continue to observe your child for mental status and respiratory changes (see [Pediatric Checklist](#) below).

### **General Guidance for Ear Pain:**

- 1) *Ear infections rarely need antibiotic treatment. They're not really infections.* The literature from the past 20 years shows that the signs and symptoms that children get when they have a cold, (painful ear, fever, fluid in their ears, red ear drum) are merely evidence of inflammation in their ear canals, adenoids, sinuses and noses, and NOT necessarily infections. Children and adults always have bacteria in their ear canals, which play a key role in keeping our bodies strong and protected. The bacteria don't just appear magically when an infant or child gets a cold or fever. They are there all the time to protect us and, in many cases, even when the colonies begin to overgrow in number, their presence and actions help the body to remove the wastes through the linings of the upper respiratory system (nose, adenoids, tonsils, sinuses, ear canals).
- 2) Despite multiple study reviews showing that antibiotics are not needed for ear infections (<http://children.webmd.com/news/20101115/ear-infections-antibiotics-often-not-needed>), and despite recommendations from the AAP (American Academy of Pediatrics) and AAFP (American Association of Family Practitioners) for physicians to minimize the use of antibiotics and ear symptoms in children, most children are still getting antibiotics from physicians to treat their upper respiratory symptoms, and supposed "ear infections." Part of this is due to parent's demands to be given some form of treatment, and part of this is due to the fact that physicians don't have sufficient time to spend explaining to parents what might be going on, or they don't have the education to know other means to treat the individual child's symptoms ([http://www.drpalevsky.com/mediacenter/Alt to Ear Pain.pdf](http://www.drpalevsky.com/mediacenter/Alt%20to%20Ear%20Pain.pdf)).
- 3) *To help alleviate ear pain, please see* <http://www.gaiaherbs.com/products/detail/701/Ear-Drops> or visit your local health food store for a similar product for ear pain relief.
- 4) Continue to observe your child for mental status changes, as well as neck pain, swelling or pain behind the ears (See [Pediatric Checklist](#)).

### **General Guidance for Vomiting and Diarrhea:**

- 1) Please read **General Guidance if Your Child is Sick**
- 2) Please read [Pediatric Checklist](#) below.
- 3) If your child is vomiting and/or has diarrhea, stop your child's regular diet, and please keep your focus on ensuring that she remains well hydrated. Good re-hydration materials include room temperature water, tea, broths, soups, chicken soup.
- 4) Hydration materials not usually recommended are juices, soft drinks, sodas, commonly used colored sugared/salted beverages and vitamin waters.
- 5) Once your child's vomiting has subsided, ideal first foods include chicken soup, rice, rice soups/congees/porridges and soft mashes of root vegetables. Foods ingested with high sugar and salt content (flour products, juice, candy, soda, processed foods) will not help their bodies heal quickly, and may worsen their symptoms again.
- 6) When introducing liquids or soft foods, please go slowly, even if your child has regained her appetite. *It's important not to shock your child's body with the introduction of beverages and foods once the symptoms of vomiting and diarrhea have abated, or while the symptoms are going on.*