



Pediatric Clinic  
PATIENT EDUCATION HANDOUTS

## TREATMENT OF FEVER

### *Do Not Use Both Ibuprofen and Acetaminophen for Fever in Children*

There is a common but potentially dangerous and unnecessary practice of giving both ibuprofen (Motrin®, Advil®) and acetaminophen (Tylenol®) together or in alternating doses for the treatment of children's fevers.

First, it is unnecessary to treat most childhood fevers. Fever is part of the body's way of defending itself against infections. Most children are not uncomfortable from fever until their temperatures rise above 102 degrees Fahrenheit. Relieving discomfort is the most important reason for treating fever. The best way to treat low-grade fevers (under 102°) is to offer the child more fluids to drink.

There is no scientific evidence that the practice of combining or alternating fever medicines is safe or results in faster reduction of fever than using either medicine alone. In fact, there is evidence that the improper use of these medicines may cause harm, specifically by poisoning a child's liver or kidneys.

It is very easy for parents to make dosage and scheduling errors even when giving single medications. The use of multiple medications makes these errors even more likely. In addition over-the-counter cold and cough medications often contain acetaminophen which, when combined with fever medicines, leads to toxic doses.

**The practitioners in the Pediatrics Clinic at Evans Army Community Hospital do not recommend using these medications together to treat fever.** We strongly recommend choosing one or the other (acetaminophen or ibuprofen) and use that single medication to treat the discomfort of fever, and only in the proper dosage and on the proper schedule.