

# Fever as Friend not Foe

In the spirit of curiosity I searched the net using the words ‘fever and evolution’ just to see what might pop up. I discovered a [research paper](#) from 1978 by Matthew Kluger.

READ MORE 

“Long regarded as a harmful by-product of infection, fever may instead be an ancient ally against disease, enhancing resistance and increasing chances of survival.”

Even in 1978, fever was considered a harmful by-product of infection! Recent research has made advances since then and it is well known that fever is an exquisite cascade of events of an immune system response to return the body functions to homeostasis (balance).

Today fever is considered “a normal response to a variety of conditions, the most common of which is infection.” [Uptodate Website](#)

## FEVER AS AN EVOLUTIONARY ADAPTATION

Kluger used the desert iguana to conduct his research. Because amphibians cannot make their own heat and rely on external sources like the sun or other heat sources, Kluger wondered how they would adapt when infected with bacteria harmful to their well-being. The lizards were one animal whose temperature he could regulate via the environment (heat/cold) in response to a fever, stimulated by an injection of a bacterium.

The method was to inject the iguana with a strain of bacteria that is known to cause infection. The options were to let the animal deal with the infection naturally, change/control the environment in terms of external temperature (either allowing the lizard to find its own heat source or prevent it from finding a heat source) and/or to give a fever reducing medication.

“Antipyresis (checking or preventing fever) of this fever using sodium salicylate (aspirin) led to mortality in 7 of 7 animals.

When 8 additional lizards were given the same dose of antipyretic drugs, yet prevented from lowering their body temperature (by keeping them in a constant-temperature incubator), only 1 died (12 percent).



This indicated that the increased mortality following the administration of sodium salicylate to bacterially infected animals was due not to some side effect of the drug but rather to the reduction in body temperature itself.”

When fever was suppressed with the sodium salicylate all the animals died. When the animals were allowed to seek a heat source or were provided with a warm environment, only 1 died. Heat is important when an infection is happening.

Today, aspirin (sodium salicylate) is not used as a fever suppressant. Children's aspirin was used when I was a child but that was all there was at the time. Now it is known that [Reye's syndrome](#) is a possible complication of using aspirin. Acetaminophen (Tylenol) was introduced in 1955 to the public as an alternative to aspirin as a pain reliever (analgesic) and fever reducer (anti-pyretic). In the mid-1990's Children's Tylenol was introduced to treat/suppress fever.

## FEVER DURING BACTERIAL INFECTION IS BENEFICIAL

“...perhaps more important, are the potential clinical implications of these data, which suggest that a fever during bacterial infection is beneficial. If a fever in response to infection does have a general adaptive value in ectotherms (like amphibians), then an inexpensive therapeutic procedure is readily available for diseased ectotherms maintained in captivity: simply provide a source of heat.”

I asked my son what happens when their pet bearded dragon Merlin gets sick. He said, ‘The first thing he does is stick his head under the heat lamp.’

“If after careful investigation moderate fever is also shown to increase survival rates for birds and mammals, then the use of antipyretic drugs would be contraindicated (not advised).

Perhaps drugs which are analgesic (pain relievers) but not antipyretic (fever reducers), reducing pain rather than the fever itself, could be substituted for the commonly used drugs, which reduce both.

It appears that we may be on the verge of verifying Sydenham's hunch that ‘fever is a mighty engine which Nature brings into the world for the conquest of her enemies’ (1666).”

So there you have it. Fever is a friend and is an evolutionary adaptation.

## A HOMEOPATHIC RESOURCE FOR PARENTS

I get it that when your kids are sick with a fever, you want to help them feel comfortable and support them through the illness.

You can use homeopathy in situations of fever to help support healing and recovery, which is a great alternative to suppressing the fever and possibly prolonging the illness.

The Powers of Homeopathy Online Education Series has designed a course called [The Immune System & Fever](#). In the 1 ½ hour e-course, you will learn what to observe with symptoms of fever and you will know when fever is something you can manage at home or when you need the help of your homeopath or physician. Great to have some homeopathic remedies in your home kit, just when you need them!

The pricing of the course has been kept low so that it is affordable and accessible to all. \$29.95 CDN

## THE 'DARK SIDE' OF ACETAMINOPHEN

As with all prescription drugs and over-the-counter medications, it is important to be aware of drug recalls and possible side effects. In my research for today's article, I found two very good resources.

Be sure to check your cupboards for these acetaminophen products that were recalled! If you have any of these products, chances are good that they have expired dates on them, but just in case, have a look!



### 1. McNeil Consumer Healthcare Announces Voluntary Recall of Certain OTC Infants' and Children's Products

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE - April 30, 2010 – Fort Washington, PA. McNeil Consumer Healthcare, Division of McNEIL-PPC, Inc., in consultation with the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA), is voluntarily recalling all lots that have not yet expired of certain over-the-counter (OTC) Children's and Infants' liquid products manufactured in the United States and distributed in the United States, Canada, Dominican Republic, Dubai (UAE), Fiji, Guam, Guatemala, Jamaica, Puerto Rico, Panama, Trinidad & Tobago, and Kuwait. (SEE RECALLED PRODUCT LIST BELOW).

2. An article written by a conventional medical doctor whose specialty is researching the dangers of prescription and over-the-counter drugs. He has some excellent advice on herbs and supplements you can take if you are on long term acetaminophen for pain management.

## REPORT

### [The Little-Known Dangers of Acetaminophen](#)

By Jay S. Cohen, MD, (Introduction by William Faloon)



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*Dana Powers*

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