



My child experiences continual fevers

My child has been experiencing fevers that appear during the cold nights and goes away during the warmer daytime hours. This has been happening repeatedly, even though blood tests for malaria came back negative. I am concerned about the ongoing symptoms and would like to understand: What could be causing this recurring nighttime fever? Is there a reason for the fever pattern related to

temperature changes and should we consider other possible diagnoses, since malaria was not confirmed by testing? Asia

Dear Asia

Fever (increase in body temperature) much as it is hated by many, is a body's way of trying to defend itself from parasites (malaria), viral (common cold), bacteria (typhoid) and other germs that may have attacked the body.

When invaded by some of the said germs, the body raises its temperature

as a way to fight against the germs while boosting other body defences including the immune system.

Cold temperatures and fevers often go hand-in-hand because feeling cold or feeling chilly with sometimes shivering and fever are both ways the body tries to fight germs that infect us.

That said, tissue inflammation, some cancers (Hodgkins), tissue destruction, allergies (though not directly) among others may also lead to a fever usually measured in various parts of the body by a thermometer.

Though the normal body temperature varies from person to person, by age, physical activity, the body part where it has been taken from and time of day, body temperature above 37.2°C , may signal a fever.

Malaria a common cause of fever when its parasites invade blood, may lead to high fever (in cycles depending on the type of parasites affecting the blood) and this may coincidentally happen at night regardless of whether it is cold or not. This could be the reason why the tot's blood was checked for malaria.

Cold weather does not directly cause fever, but may create conditions for germs especially viruses to thrive, leading to fever requiring that many more tests are done by medics to get to the root cause of the fever.