

Fever and Taking Temperatures in Child Care

A temperature measures body heat. A “normal” temperature varies with the child's age, activity, and time of day. The average normal body temperature is 98.6°F (37.0°C), and a normal temperature range is between 97.5°F (36.4°C) and 99.5°F (37.5°C).

Fever Definition

A fever is a body temperature that is higher than normal. A fever usually is a temperature of 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit (38 degrees Celsius) or higher.

CDC considers a person to have a fever when he or she has a measured temperature of 100.4° F (38° C) or greater, or feels warm to the touch, or gives a history of feeling feverish.

The presence of fever suggests an infectious cause, but fever is not always present with an infection. This is a sign that the body is fighting an illness and is not an illness/disease itself

Taking the Child’s Temperature

Digital multiuse thermometers read body temperature when the sensor located at the tip of the thermometer

1. **Oral:** Into the mouth for children 4 to 5 years and older. For children who can hold a thermometer under the tongue using proper technique (usually children older than four or five years).
2. **Axillary:** Under the arm by the armpit, for all children. This method may be used in childcare programs to check (screen) a child’s temperature. Axillary temperature measurement can be considered a viable alternative, since it is practical and reasonably accurate
3. **Forehead:** Temporal artery thermometers read the infrared heat waves released by the temporal artery, which runs across the forehead just below the skin. Temporal artery (forehead) thermometers can be used on children of any age.
4. **Ear:** Tympanic thermometers read the infrared heat waves released by the eardrum. When used in children above 6 months of age, it needs to be placed safely & correctly in the child’s ear canal. Too much earwax can cause the reading to be incorrect and pushing the thermometer deep into the ear, can cause injury to the eardrum resulting in pain, infection, & hearing loss.
5. **Rectal:** Into a baby’s, bottom (rectum). Though a rectal temperature is appropriate for infants, it is discouraged because of safety and practical issues, as well as for the physical and psychological discomfort it may cause. Only the persons with specific health training in performing this procedure should take rectal temperature in childcare.

NOTE: Method and instructions may vary depending on the product. **Read the instructions before using the product.**

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1. Oral Temperature Check

- Follow the instructions on the package
- When using oral thermometers, individual plastic covers should be used on with each use
- Turn the thermometer on and place the tip under one side of your child's tongue toward the back of the mouth. Help the child hold thermometer with their lips and fingers not teeth.
- Keep the lips sealed over the thermometer until it beeps. Check the digital reading.
- Document the temperature, time taken and the route.

2. Axillary Temperature Check

- Follow the instructions on the package
- Take the thermometer out of its holder & put the tip into a new throwaway plastic cover.
- Put the end with the covered tip securely in armpit & hold the arm down tightly at your side.
- Keep the thermometer in armpit until the digital thermometer beeps.
- Remove the thermometer when numbers show up in the "window".
- Read the numbers in the window. Add at least 1 degree to the temperature showing in the window.
- Document the temperature, time taken and the route.

3. Forehead / Temporal Artery Temperature Check

- Temporal Artery Thermometer can be used for all ages.
- Follow the instructions on the package to know how and where to slide or aim the sensor across the forehead to get the most accurate measurement.
- Read child's temperature on the display screen.
- Document the temperature, time taken and the route
- Non-contact models may help reduce the risk of passing germs.





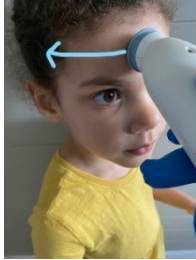
4. Ear/ Tympanic Temperature Check

- a. Follow the instructions on the package.
- b. Pull the ear back and up if the child is over 1 year old. Then aim the tip of the ear probe between the opposite eye and ear.
- c. Document the temperature, time taken and the route

5. Rectal Thermometer: Rectal Temperature Check

- a. Follow the instructions on the package.
- b. Rectal temperatures should be taken only by persons with specific health training
- c. Caregivers/teachers should be aware of the Safety and Child Abuse concerns
- d. Parent written permission and presence of another approved adult during temperature check may reduce concerns of abuse/negligence.
- e. Document the temperature, time taken and the route.

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	No Contact Thermometer	Temporal Thermometer	Digital Thermometer
How does it work?			
	Detects the temperature of the forehead by measuring the infrared heat/energy coming off the body.	Measures the temperature of the skin surface over the temporal artery in the head.	Must use a single use, disposable cover on the thermometer each time temperature is taken. Measures a temperature by direct contact.
Where do I use it?	<p>Point at forehead</p> 	<p>Touch the center of the forehead and scan horizontally in a straight line over to the hairline.</p>  <p>Do not curve downward to the temple or you could miss the temporal artery, which is up in the forehead.</p>	<p>Under the arm (axillary method): Place tip of thermometer in direct contact with skin under armpit.</p> <p>In the mouth (oral method): <u>For children pre-school age and older only.</u> Place tip of thermometer under tongue.</p>
How do I clean and disinfect it?	Use alcohol wipes to disinfect the thermometer before another person handles it.	Use alcohol wipes (at least 70% alcohol) to disinfect the thermometer between each temperature check.	
Do I need to use gloves?	No. Since there is no contact with a child, you do not have to wear gloves or disinfect the thermometer in between each child's temperature check.	Yes. Because there is direct contact with the child, use gloves if available, OR perform hand hygiene between each temperature check.	
	No matter which thermometer you use, always follow manufacturers' instructions.		

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Applicable: Center, Family Child Care Home, Large Family Child Care Home, & Letters of Compliance

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References:

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<https://www.cdc.gov/quarantine/air/reporting-deaths-illness/definitions-symptomsreportable-illnesses.html> June 30, 2017