



Taking Baby's Temperature Tips

Nothing rattles a new mom or dad more than when baby has a fever. Fortunately, there are many ways to take a baby's temperature. (A digital thermometer offers a quick and accurate way to take a child's temperature.)

To take a rectal temperature

- Most people cringe at the thought of taking a rectal temperature. But don't worry – it's a simple process:
- Lubricate the tip of the thermometer with a lubricant, such as petroleum jelly.
- Insert the lubricated thermometer into the anal opening about ½ inch to 1 inch (about 1.25 to 2.5 centimeters). Stop if you feel any resistance.
- Steady the thermometer between your second and third fingers as you cup your hand against your baby's bottom. Soothe your child and speak quietly as you hold the thermometer in place.
- Wait until you hear the appropriate number of beeps or other signal that the temperature is ready to be read.

To take an oral temperature

- This process is easy in an older, cooperative child.
- Wait 20 to 30 minutes after your child finishes eating or drinking to take an oral temperature, and make sure there's no gum or candy in your child's mouth.
- Place the tip of the thermometer under the tongue and ask your child to close his or her lips around it. Remind your child not to bite down or talk, and to relax and breathe normally through the nose.
- Wait until you hear the appropriate number of beeps or other signal that the temperature is ready to be read. Write down the number on the screen, noting the time of day that you took the reading.

To take an auxiliary temperature

- The most convenient way to take baby's temperature is through auxiliary methods like the armpit or the ear.
- Though not as accurate as oral or rectal, auxiliary methods are easy and the most comfortable for your baby.
- Never take a child's temperature right after a bath or if he or she has been bundled tightly for a while — this can affect the temperature reading.

Call your doctor when

- Your baby is younger than 3 months and has a temperature of 100.4° F (38° C) or higher.
- Your older child (over three months old) has a temperature of 102.2° F (39° C) or higher.
- Your pediatrician may have different advice for when to call about a fever so be sure to ask your pediatrician for his or her specific guidelines. Always follow the recommendations and advice of your pediatrician.