

FEVER FACT SHEET

What is a normal temperature?

The normal temperature range varies, depending on the method you use:

Armpit: 34.7°C to 37.3°C

Mouth: 35.5°C to 37.5°C

Ear: 35.8°C to 38°C

Babies younger than three months old should see a doctor when they have a fever.

Older children with fever who seem otherwise well and are drinking enough liquid can be treated at home.

The degree of a fever does not indicate how serious the illness is; the child's behaviour and overall appearance are generally the most important factors.

How to take a child's temperature

There are two ways to safely take a child's temperature:

- under the arm
- by the mouth (oral)

Ask the pharmacist any questions you may have when buying a thermometer.

Armpit method

Taking a temperature under the armpit is not as exact, but it will let you know if your child has a fever. This method is used for newborns and young children.

- Place the tip of the thermometer in the centre of the child's armpit. The silver tip must touch the skin.
- Make sure the child's arm is tight against their body.
- Leave the thermometer in place for about one minute, until you hear the "beep."

Aural method

Temperature measurements taken by the ear are not accurate in small children and should not be used in children under 3 years (36 months) of age unless a thermometer designed for aural temperature recording is used.

How to take a temperature

- Normal temperature range
- Children
- Adults
- Tips for using a digital thermometer

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Mouth method

Older children and adults can have their temperature taken under the tongue with their mouth closed. This method should NOT BE USED for children under five years old. Carefully place the tip of the thermometer under the child's tongue. With the child's mouth closed, leave the thermometer in place for about one minute, until you hear the "beep." To clean the thermometer, wash only the tip with soap and warm (not hot) water and wipe off with a clean dry lint free cloth. Dry well before storing or re-use.

How to take an adult's temperature

Take an adult's temperature by mouth, in the ear or under the armpit. The armpit method is less accurate and is normally used only if the person is extremely drowsy or not clear mentally.

Follow the same method as used for children when using a digital thermometer.

Tips for using a digital thermometer

A digital thermometer is best for taking temperatures by the armpit and mouth. Always remember to press the button to turn the thermometer "on."

- Follow instructions for armpit or mouth method.
- When you hear the "beep," remove the thermometer and read the temperature on the display.

Please check with your supplier regarding maintenance of your digital thermometer