Tips on Temperature Taking

When to take your temperature:

1. Wait for 20 to 30 minutes after smoking, eating, or drinking a hot or cold liquid
2. Wait at least 1 hour after heavy exercise or a hot bath before measuring body temperature

How to take your temperature:

3. There are different ways of temperature taking for the different types of thermometers available

Glass thermometer

4. Wash the thermometer bulb with soap and water before use
5. Shake the thermometer a few times to bring the level of liquid in the thermometer below 35 °C
6. Temperatures can be taken from the armpit or mouth

Armpit reading

7. Place the thermometer bulb under your armpit. Press arm against body to hold the thermometer in place. Remove the thermometer and read the temperature after 5 minutes

Oral reading

8. Place the thermometer bulb under your tongue. Close your mouth and do not talk or bite the thermometer. Remove the thermometer and read the temperature after 3 minutes
9. Wash the bulb of the thermometer with soap and water after use
**Digital thermometer**

10. Wash the area of the thermometer bulb with soap and water before use
11. Switch on the thermometer and wait until it is ready to register a reading
12. Temperatures can be taken from the armpit or mouth

**Armpit Reading**

13. Place the thermometer bulb under your armpit. Press arm against body to hold the thermometer in place. The thermometer will beep to signal that the temperature display is ready for reading. Remove the thermometer and read the temperature

**Oral Reading**

14. Place the thermometer bulb under your tongue. Close your mouth and do not talk or bite the thermometer. The thermometer will beep to signal that the temperature display is ready for reading. Remove the thermometer and read the temperature
15. Wash the area of the thermometer bulb with soap and water after use

**Ear (tympanic) thermometer**

16. To keep the probe clean, use a disposable probe cover. Use a new cover each time you take an ear temperature
17. Switch on the thermometer
18. Pull the ear backwards and upwards to straighten the ear canal when the thermometer is ready to register a reading
19. Center the probe tip in the ear, and push gently inward towards the eardrum. Do not force it in.
20. Press the activation button and hold until a reading appears (some models may beep when it is ready for a reading)
21. Remove the thermometer and read the temperature
22. Discard cap after use (use a new cap for every temperature taking)
Non-contact infrared forehead thermometer

23. Non-contact infrared forehead thermometers are held 3 cm to 5 cm from the person and typically measure temperature on the forehead or temple.

24. If the temperature reading is >37.4 ºC, you may have fever.

25. Person’s head to hold still and to hold the thermometer steady for 2-3 seconds during the measurement. Movement will impact the temperature reading.

26. For best results, the person should be indoors and away from direct sunlight for at least 30 minutes before taking temperature.

27. Remove any hair from your forehead before measuring temperature. Clean any sweat or dirt or cosmetic away from forehead to improve accuracy.

Remember

• It is important to read the manufacturer’s instructions on the proper use of the thermometer.

• When washing glass or digital thermometers, wash only the area in contact with the mouth/skin as the thermometer may not be waterproof.

• Do not talk when taking an oral temperature or move about when taking an armpit temperature.

Do you know

• Temperatures taken at different parts of the body present different readings – those taken from the armpit are lower than readings from the mouth and ear.

• For adults: if the armpit temperature is 37.0 ºC and above, the oral temperature is 37.3 ºC and above, or the ear temperature is 37.7 ºC and above, you have a fever.

• Children (below 12 years) have a fever if the armpit temperature is over 37.2 ºC, the oral temperature is over 37.5 ºC or the ear temperature is over 37.9 ºC.

• The normal temperature for healthy adults and children ranges from 36.2 ºC to 37.2 ºC and the average normal temperature is taken as 37.0 ºC.

• Children tend to have higher body temperatures due to higher metabolic rates.

• Women who are ovulating may have temperatures that are 0.6 ºC higher due to hormonal changes in their bodies.

• Adults over 65 years of age may have temperatures that are 0.3 ºC lower because of lower metabolic rates.
Sources

- HealthHub [https://www.healthhub.sg/a-z/diseases-and-conditions/693/common-childhood-conditions-fever]


- MedlinePlus [a service of U.S. National Library of Medicine (NLM)] [https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/001982.htm]

- National Center for Biotechnology Information [https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK331/]