

# TAKING A TEMPERATURE

A guide to understanding how to take a child's temperature.  
A temperature of 100.4°F (38°C) or higher is considered a fever.



## RECTAL

**Age:** Most accurate for infants 0-3 months

**How to:** Position your baby stomach down on your lap or on their back with their knees toward their chest. Apply petroleum jelly to the end of the thermometer and anus. Insert the thermometer gently until the silver tip is no longer visible - no more than ½ inch. Stop if there is resistance. A digital reading takes about 10 seconds.



## FOREHEAD (TEMPORAL)

**Age:** Reliable for children ages 3 months and older

**How to:** Begin with the thermometer at the center of the forehead and slide to one temple, avoiding the hairline. Maintain contact with the skin.

**Note:** Some newer thermometers do not require you to slide it across the forehead.



## ORAL

**Age:** Usually able to use beginning at 4-5 years old

**How to:** Place the thermometer under your child's tongue, to one side or the other. Have your child close their mouth and seal their lips around the thermometer. Do not let them hold it with their teeth. Their mouth should remain closed for about 10 seconds until a digital reading appears.



## EAR

**Age:** Reliable for children ages 6 months and older

**How to:** Gently pull the earlobe up and back to straighten the ear canal. Aim the ear probe toward their opposite ear. Reading takes less than 2 seconds.

**Note:** Wait 15 minutes before using this method if the child has been in cold weather.

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## NOT RECOMMENDED

Allegro Pediatrics does not recommend taking AXILLARY (armpit) temperatures or DIGITAL PACIFIER temperatures. These may be used as estimates but do not provide an accurate reading.