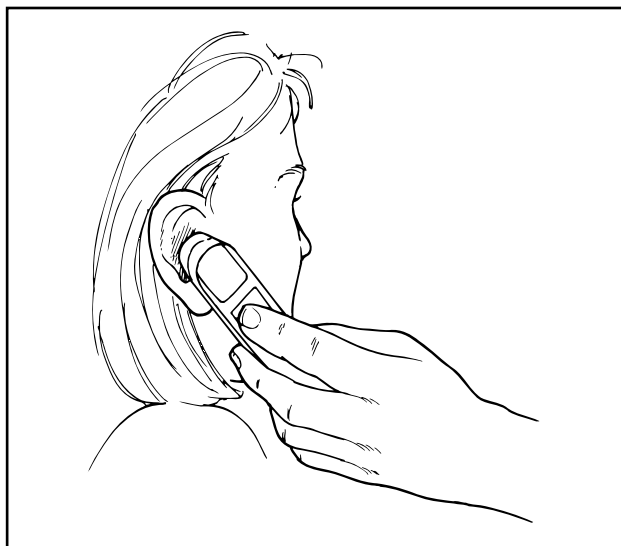
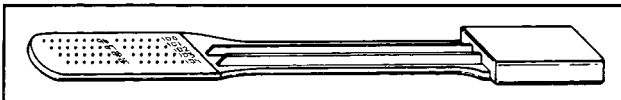
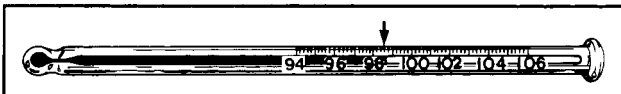
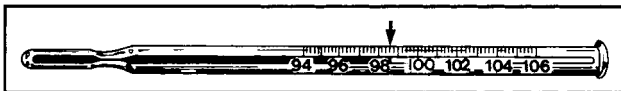


Reading a Thermometer and Taking a Temperature

GENERAL INFORMATION

Thermometers come in different types. Glass oral mercury thermometers may have a longer, thinner bulb; have a blue or clear bulb; or be marked "oral." Glass rectal mercury thermometers may have a shorter, rounder bulb; have a red bulb; or be marked "rectal." Chemical dot and electronic thermometers may come in different shapes and brands; follow the directions on your brand.



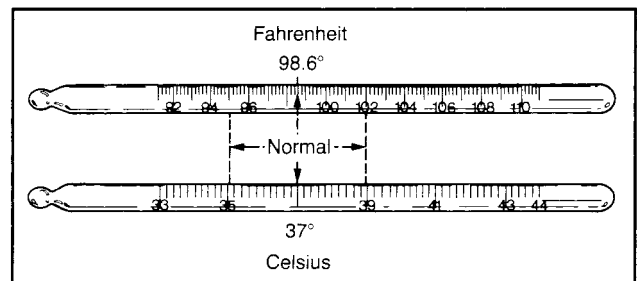
EQUIPMENT

- Thermometer
- Watch or clock with a sweep hand
- Lubricant (if taking a rectal temperature)

READING A GLASS THERMOMETER

Thermometers come with Fahrenheit (F) or with Celsius (C) markings. Each large line is one degree. Each degree is divided into parts. Each part is 2 tenths of a degree (0.2).

1. Hold the tip of the thermometer (end opposite the bulb) at eye level.
2. Turn the thermometer slowly until you can see the mercury column (silver in color) and the numbers.
3. The temperature reading on the top thermometer is 98.6°F.



TAKING A TEMPERATURE WITH A GLASS THERMOMETER

Special Notes

1. Glass thermometers can break easily if not used properly.
2. If a thermometer breaks inside the body, call the emergency room immediately.
3. Always check the thermometer for any breaks or cracks before you use it.
4. Glass thermometers can lose their accuracy with age.

Steps

1. Take the thermometer out of the package. Rinse it completely in cool water.
2. Hold the tip end of the thermometer firmly between your thumb and first finger. Shake the

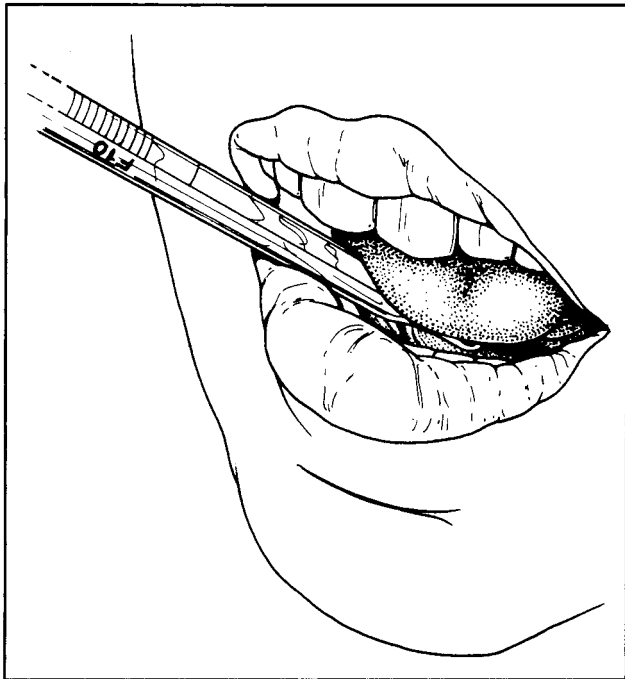
Reading a Thermometer and Taking a Temperature

thermometer until the mercury line is below the number 95°F (35°C).

Choose *oral*, *rectal*, or *axillary* for the next step.

Oral

1. Place the oral thermometer under the tongue. Keep the lips closed—do not bite down.



2. Keep the thermometer under the tongue for 5 to 8 minutes. Take an oral temperature on a cooperative child older than 4 or 5 years of age.
3. When the timing is up, hold the thermometer at eye level. Read the number exactly where the fluid stops.

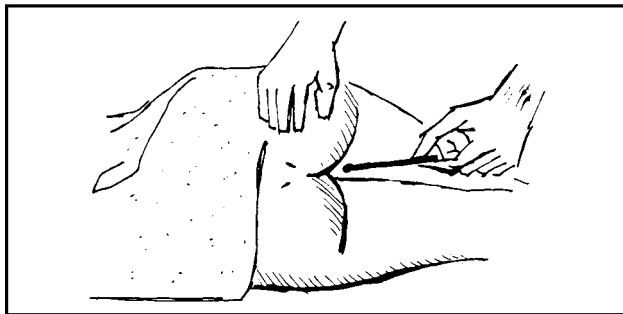
Special Notes

1. The normal reading is between 96.4°F and 99.1°F (35.8°C and 37.8°C).
2. Do not take the oral temperatures of
 - a. Infants,
 - b. Persons who can breathe only through their mouths,
 - c. Persons who are unconscious,
 - d. Persons who may bite the thermometer.
3. Wait at least 30 minutes after a person has eaten or drunk before taking the temperature.

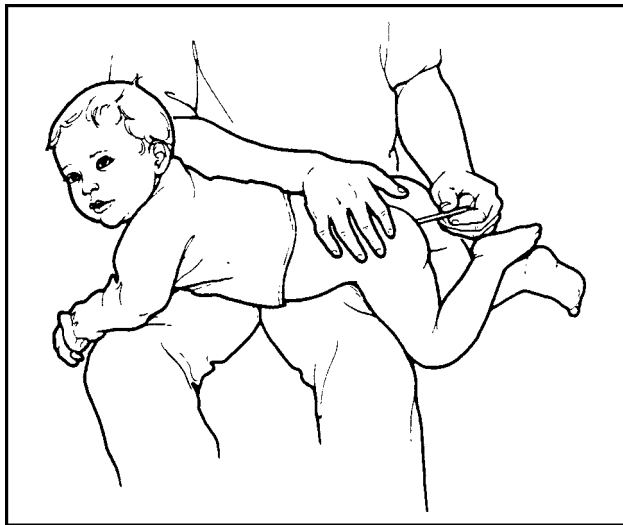
Rectal

1. Have a tissue and lubricating jelly on hand.
2. Have the person lie comfortably on his or her side, stomach, or back.

3. Put a small amount of lubricating jelly on the bulb end of the rectal thermometer.
4. Separate the skin of the buttocks to have a clear view of the rectum.
5. Insert the thermometer into the rectum about one inch in an adult or about one half inch in an infant or child. Hold the infant still with one hand. An axillary temperature may be better for an uncooperative child or a child less than 4 years old. Hold the thermometer in place for 3 minutes.



From Rambo BJ and Wood LA: *Nursing Skills for Clinical Practice*, 3rd ed. Philadelphia, WB Saunders, 1982.



From Wong D and Hess C: *Wong and Whaley's Clinical Manual of Pediatric Nursing*, 5th ed. Copyright 2000 by the CV Mosby Co., St. Louis.

6. When the time is up, remove and wipe off the thermometer with a tissue. Hold it at eye level and read the number exactly where the fluid stops.

Special Notes

1. The normal reading is between 97.2°F and 100°F (36.2°C and 37.8°C).
2. Check with the nurse or doctor before taking the

rectal temperature of someone who has had rectal surgery or who has heart disease.

3. Use only a rectal thermometer. An oral thermometer with a long bulb could injure the rectum.

Axillary

1. With the person lying or sitting, put the bulb of the oral thermometer in the center of the armpit. Taking an axillary temperature is better for an uncooperative child of any age or for a child less than 4 years old.



From Wong D and Hess C: Wong and Whaley's Clinical Manual of Pediatric Nursing, 5th ed. Copyright 2000 by the CV Mosby Co., St. Louis.

2. Make sure the armpit is dry. There should be no clothing between the arm and the chest.
3. Keep the thermometer in place for 10 minutes. Keep the arm at the person's side.
4. When the time is up, hold the thermometer at eye level and read the number.

Special Notes

1. The normal reading is between 96.6°F and 98°F (35.9°C and 36.7°C).
2. Use the underarm only if the oral or rectal areas cannot be used.
3. Wait at least 15 minutes after a person has bathed before taking the temperature. Make sure the area is completely dry.

General Notes

1. Write down the time, the place on the body used to take the temperature (oral, rectal, or axillary), and the temperature reading. Body temperatures can vary with age, the time of day, and the part of the body used.
2. Call your nurse or doctor:
 - a. If the temperature is _____.
 - b. If there are signs of infection or fever.
3. After using a glass thermometer, wash it with warm (not hot) soapy water. Rinse it with cool water and dry it.
4. Store the glass thermometer in a container to prevent breakage.
5. If using an electronic oral or ear thermometer, follow the instructions in the package. Pay careful attention to the beeping tones, which tell you when to remove the thermometer.

OTHER INSTRUCTIONS
