

How to Take a Temperature

What is a Fever?

- A fever is an unexpected increase in body temperature and is usually a symptom of an illness, including coronavirus
- Fevers can cause overheating, cold shivers and in bad cases, hallucinations
- A body temperature over 38.0°C is classed as a fever
- Fevers usually pass within a few days by themselves, but medication can also bring the temperature down
- Fevers can be roughly diagnosed by hand by feeling the back or the chest, not the forehead
- Fevers are most accurately diagnosed by using a thermometer

There are two main types of thermometer

- Digital Thermometer
- Digital Ear Thermometer

Digital Thermometers

- Readily available to purchase in pharmacies and supermarkets
- Cost-effective option and easy to use
- Can be used in the mouth or under the armpit
- Turn off, clean with warm soapy water and rinse well before use

How to Use

Oral use is recommended for children over the age of five and adults.

1. Turn off, clean with warm soapy water and rinse well before use
2. Turn the thermometer on and place the tip under the individual's tongue towards the back of the mouth
3. The individual should close their lips and wait until it beeps or flashes, displaying a temperature

Armpit use is recommended for children under five and adults who cannot have oral examinations.

1. Turn off, clean with warm soapy water and rinse well before use
2. Turn the thermometer on and place under the individual's armpit
3. Instruct the individual to keep their arm pressed tight against their body until it beeps or flashes, displaying a temperature
4. Young children should be supported in a comfortable position

Digital Ear Thermometers

- Not recommended for children under six months old
- More expensive option due to technology and speed
- Used by pointing an infrared laser onto the eardrum
- Can give inaccurate results if not done correctly or if there's obstruction

How to Use

- Turn off, clean the tip with warm soapy water and rinse well before use
- Gently insert into the individual's ear
- The laser requires clear passage to the ear drum, so it may be necessary to pull the ear back and lift it up to help locate it
- Turn the thermometer on and wait for the reading

Please always check the instructions of the thermometer before using.

Avoid Using

- Glass Thermometers – They are outdated, unsafe and have been phased out
- Forehead Strips – They only tell you the temperature of the skin and not the internal body temperature

Using CareDocs

- CareDocs can be used to record body temperature via the Temperature Chart
- You can also log any concerns you have in relation to the temperature
- You can set hourly or daily monitoring alerts to remind you to check and re-enter data

If You Diagnose a Fever

- The individual should self-isolate – it may be a symptom of COVID-19
- Call 111 or visit the NHS online 111 service for guidance
- If you have more than one resident with symptoms, also inform the Health Protection Team (HPT)
- The individual should not go to their GP or pharmacy
- The fever should pass by itself in a few days
- Keep an eye out for further illness that may develop

Sources

NHS 111 Online Service: <https://111.nhs.uk/covid-19/>

Health Protection Team (England): <https://www.gov.uk/health-protection-team>

Government Guidance for Admission and Care of Residents During COVID-19 Incident in a Care Home: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-admission-and-care-of-people-in-care-homes>