How to Take Your Temperature

Taking your temperature with a thermometer is the best way to find out if you have a fever or if you are fighting an infection. A digital thermometer is the most accurate way to take your temperature. The three most common digital thermometers are oral, forehead, and ear and each works a little differently to get your temperature.

No matter which kind of thermometer you use, when taking a temperature, first wash your hands with warm water and soap. And clean your thermometer before and after each use with soap and water. To use an oral digital thermometer: do not eat or drink 30 minutes before you take your temperature.

Turn the thermometer on and place it under your tongue. Hold the thermometer in place with your mouth closed until the reading is complete. Most digital thermometers beep to let you know it is finished. The reading should take between 30-40 seconds. After you finish, store it in a cool, dry place.

If you are doing a forehead temperature check, turn on the thermometer, place the sensor in the middle of the forehead and slowly swipe it across the forehead and down toward the top of one ear. Keep the sensor in contact with the skin. The thermometer will display your reading. Once you are done, remember to clean your thermometer with soap and water, and store in a cool, dry place.

For an ear temperature check, turn the thermometer on, pull the ear back and up and place the thermometer in the ear canal aiming the tip of the probe between the opposite eye and ear. Keep the thermometer in your ear until the reading is done. Most thermometers will beep to let you know when it is finished. After you taken your temperature, remember to clean the thermometer with soap and water, and store in a cool, dry place.

A normal body temperature is 98.6 degrees Fahrenheit. If your temperature rises to 100.4 degrees or higher you have a fever. If you do have a fever, call your healthcare provider, and ask about the best way to treat it. Talk about whether you need to get any further testing. Get plenty of rest and feel better soon.

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