

DOES YOUR CHILD HAVE A FEVER?

When your child's body temperature is above 100.4°F (38°C) (or 99°F (37.2°C) if measured under arm), your child has a fever.

What Causes a Fever?

Fever is a common symptom of many illnesses. Your child gets a fever because their body is working hard to fight the illness. Fevers can be caused by:

- Viruses like the common cold or the flu
- Bacteria like strep throat or some ear infections.
- Other changes in their body like teething or vaccines.



Measuring Your Child's Temperature

A digital thermometer is the best way to measure a child's temperature.

- For newborns, measuring temperature in the rectum is most accurate.
- Once a child can hold a thermometer under their tongue an oral temperature can be measured. An oral temperature is very accurate.
- Ear and underarm temperatures may be less accurate.
- Wash your thermometer with lukewarm soapy water or rubbing alcohol before each use. Do NOT use the same thermometer for both rectal and oral temperature measurements.

Measurement Method	Temperature that indicates fever
Rectal (bottom)	
Oral (mouth)	100.4°F (38°C) or higher
Tympanic (ear)	
Axillary (underarm)	99°F (37.2°C) or higher

How to Measure Rectal (bottom) Temperature

- Have your child lie down on his or her stomach on your lap.
- Apply a small amount of lubricant (such as petroleum jelly) to the tip of the thermometer.
- Gently insert the thermometer about ½ an inch to 1 inch (1.25cm to 2.5cm) into the rectum, while bracing your finger against their buttock.
- When the thermometer has completed its reading you may hear a beep or see a flash (this may take about 1 minute). Then you can remove the thermometer and read your child's temperature.

How to Measure Oral (mouth) Temperature

- Place the thermometer under your child's tongue and toward the back of their mouth.
- Have your child close their mouth and hold the thermometer in place using their lips and fingers. If your child struggles to keep their mouth closed, encourage them to breathe through their nose.
- When the thermometer has completed its reading you may hear a beep or see a flash (this may take about 1 minute). Then you can remove the thermometer and read your child's temperature.



CHARLES B. WANG
COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTER

General Info Line (212) 226-8339

Website www.cbwchc.org

268 Canal Street, New York, NY 10013

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Obstetrics & Gynecology (OB/GYN) (212) 966-0228

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