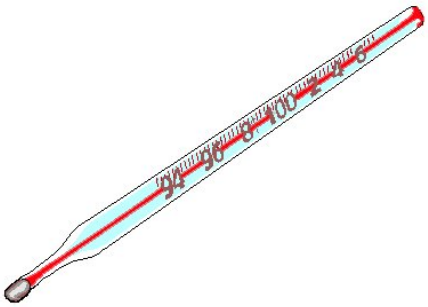
Rectal Temperature Procedure

For infants and children, the rectal temperature is the most accurate way of determining whether or not your child has a fever. Once a child is old enough to follow directions, oral temperatures may be used. The rectal thermometer has a short, stubby tip to prevent injury to the rectum. A normal rectal temperature is 99.6° F. (37.5° C.). It is 1° F higher than a normal oral temperature.



HOME CARE INSTRUCTIONS

- Hold the thermometer by the end that is opposite of the tip. Shake the thermometer down below the 97° F (36.1° C) mark. Hold the thermometer by the end that is opposite of the tip. Snap your wrist and hand to shake down the liquid inside the thermometer. Shake it over a couch or bed. This way, if it slips out of your hand, it will not break.
- Lubricate the tip of the thermometer with lubricating or petroleum jelly.
- Place your child on their stomach to limit struggling.
- Spread the buttock cheeks and gently insert the lubricated thermometer about an inch into the rectum. **Never force it.** Hold the buttock cheeks together to keep the thermometer from falling out. **Do not hold the thermometer.** It could break and cause injury to the rectum.
- Leave the thermometer in place for 3 minutes.
- Never leave your child or baby unattended with a thermometer in the rectum.
- To read the thermometer, slowly turn the thermometer until the line of mercury is visible. Each long line represents one full degree. Each short line is 0.2 (two-tenths) degrees.

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