Taking Your Baby's Temperature

It is often hard to tell if your baby has a fever.

It is a good idea to check your baby's temperature if there are any signs of illness, including:

- Sleeping more than usual.
- Unusually drowsy.
- Weakness.
- No interest in play.
- Unusual fussiness.
- Extreme crying.
- Poor appetite.
- Vomiting.
- Diarrhea.
- Breathing problems.
- New skin rash.
- Soft spot on the head is bulging out or is sunken in.

The only suggested method for taking your baby's temperature is the rectal temperature. Rectal (in the bottom) temperatures are the most accurate temperatures. REMEMBER-any rectal temperature (including a normal one) is about 1 degree higher than an oral temperature.

DO NOT USE OTHER METHODS OF TAKING TEMPERATURES IN BABIES

- Oral temperatures should **NOT** be tried on babies.

The following methods are NOT ACCURATE AND **NOT RECOMMENDED:**

- Electronic pacifier thermometers.
- Ear (tympanic) thermometers.
- Forehead or temporal artery thermometers.
- Axillary (underarm) thermometers.

TAKING A RECTAL TEMPERATURE

- Avoid a glass thermometer unless this is the only thermometer you have.
- Digital thermometers may be safer and easier to use than glass thermometers.

1. Lie your baby's stomach down on your lap or on lie your baby on their back with the thighs lifted.
2. Put some water-based jelly or petroleum jelly on the end of the thermometer to lubricate.
3. Insert the thermometer gently into the anus until the tip is not visible (about ½ to 1 inch). Stop if you feel resistance.
4. Keep your baby still while the thermometer is in.
5. Remove the thermometer:
   - When you hear the signal (digital thermometer).
   - After 3 minutes (glass thermometer).

Your baby has a fever if the rectal temperature is over 100.4° F (38° C).

FEELING YOUR BABY'S SKIN TEMPERATURE

If you do not have or are not comfortable using a rectal thermometer, feel your baby's skin to see if your baby seems unusually warm. Skin warmth may be used to detect fever in babies. You can touch your cheek to the baby's forehead to check for skin warmth.

SEEK MEDICAL CARE IF:

- Your baby is older than 3 months with a rectal temperature of 100.5º F (38.1° C) or higher for more than 1 day.
- Your baby has any of the problems listed a the top of this sheet.

SEEK IMMEDIATE MEDICAL CARE IF:

Your baby is 3 months old or younger with:

- **A rectal temperature of 100.4º F (38º C) or higher.**
- Skin that is warm to the touch AND no rectal thermometer is available.

Your baby is older than 3 months with:.

- A rectal temperature of 102º F (38.9º C) or higher.
- Skin that is VERY warm to the touch **AND** no rectal thermometer is available.
- Your baby is acting ill even if there is no fever.
- Your baby has difficulty breathing.
- Your baby has repeated vomiting or diarrhea or both.

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