



Arundel Pediatrics, P.A.

HOW TO TAKE YOUR CHILD'S TEMPERATURE

A temperature of 100.4 F (38 C) or higher is considered a fever in any child.

The best way to take a child's temperature depends on their age.

AGE	PREFERRED/MOST ACCURATE METHOD	ALTERNATIVE METHOD	NOTES
0-3 Months	Rectal	---	Rectal is the gold standard for core body temperature in newborns and young infants
3-6 Months	Rectal	Tympanic (ear) Axillary (armpit) *as Screening	Tympanic and Axillary are considered less accurate. If result is borderline/high confirm with rectal
6 Months- 3 Years	Rectal (still preferred)	Tympanic (ear) Axillary (armpit)	Tympanic thermometers can be acceptable but results depend on correct technique and cooperation of the child. Readings can vary with earwax, technique, etc. Axillary is less accurate but can be used as screening.
4-5 Years	Oral (mouth)	Tympanic (ear) Temporal (forehead)	Oral is most reliable if the child is cooperative and can hold thermometer correctly under the tongue
5 Years & Older	Oral (mouth)	Tympanic (ear) Temporal (forehead)	Oral is most accurate. Tympanic and Temporal are convenient options but readings can vary with poor technique, earwax, outdoor temperature, etc. Confirm high reading with oral temperature

*Axillary, pacifier thermometers and fever strips for the forehead are generally not recommended. They are not accurate but can be used as quick screenings. Results should be confirmed with another method.