



Using a Rectal Thermometer

There are many methods for measuring body temperature. At Hunterdon Pediatric Associates, we recommend using a digital rectal thermometer in babies under 6 months of age. This method is more accurate compared to checking an underarm (axillary) temperature.

Fever is a temperature of 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit or greater. Our protocol is to have all babies with fever under 4 months of age be evaluated. So, if your baby is under 4 months of age and has a fever, please call our office so that we can arrange for an office visit.

Although it may seem scary, taking a rectal temperature is neither difficult nor painful. Please refer to the instructions below. If you would like, one of our nurses or certified medical assistants can demonstrate how to do it.

To take the temperature in your child's bottom (rectally):

- 1. Turn on the digital thermometer and then put a small amount of lubricant, such as petroleum jelly, on the small end of it.*
- 2. Place your child across your lap or on something firm, either faceup or facedown (if he's facedown, put one hand on his back; if he's faceup, bend your child's leg to his chest, resting your free hand on the back of his thighs).*
- 3. Spread the buttocks apart, then gently insert the small end of the thermometer in your child's bottom (or rectum), putting it in about 1/2 inch to 1 inch.*
- 4. Hold the thermometer in place for about one minute or until the device signals that it's done (by beeping or lighting up). Remove it and read the number.*

Devised 5/16 –

Reference – healthychildren.org 1/9/16