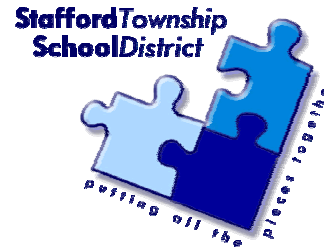


Talk to Your Doctor

As any parent knows, taking a squirming child's temperature can be challenging. But it is one of the most important tools doctors have to figure out if your child has an illness or infection. The method you choose to take your child's temperature will depend on his or her age and how cooperative your child is. Ask your doctor which type of thermometer to use for your child.

All kids get fevers, and in the majority of cases, children are completely back to normal within a few days. For older infants and children (but not necessarily for infants younger than three months), the way your child is acting is far more important than the reading on your thermometer. Everyone gets cranky when they have a fever. This is normal and should be expected.

Always call your child's doctor for advice if you're ever in doubt about what to do, what a fever might mean, or if your child is acting ill in a way that concerns you - even if there's no fever.



For additional information contact your school nurse at 609-978-5700

Primary Learning Center x1276
Ocean Acres x1113
Oxycocus x1073
McKinley Avenue x1140
Intermediate x1074
District Nurse Coordinator x 1205



Wellness Series

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Taking Your Child's Temperature





What is a Fever?

Fever occurs when the brain's internal "thermostat", the hypothalamus, raises the body temperature above its normal level. The hypothalamus normally sends a signal to the body to maintain a temperature of about 98.6°F.

Most people experience a slight fluctuation in body temperature during the course of the day: it's usually a little lower in the morning and a little higher in the evening. Children's temperatures can increase slightly when they exercise or become overheated.

Sometimes the body's temperature rises in response to an illness or infection. Researchers believe that the body "turns up the heat" to make the body a less comfortable place for the germs that cause infections. Fever helps the body fight infections by stimulating the natural defense mechanisms. Fever is usually a symptom of an underlying problem.

How do I know if my child has a Fever?

By using a reliable thermometer, you can accurately measure your child's temperature. Whichever type of thermometer you choose, be sure you know how to use it correctly to get an accurate reading. Keep and follow the manufacturer's recommendations for any thermometer.

Digital Thermometers usually provide the quickest, most accurate readings. They come in many sizes and shapes, are available at most supermarkets and pharmacies, and are available in a range of prices. Although you should read the manufacturer's instructions to determine what method or methods the thermometer is designed for, many digital thermometers can be used for the following temperature-taking methods:

- Oral (in the mouth)
- Rectal (in the bottom)
- Axillary (under the arm)

Digital thermometers usually have a plastic, flexible probe with a tempera-



ture sensor at the tip and a easy to read display on the opposite end.

Electronic ear thermometers measure the temperature inside the ear canal. They're quick, accurate, and easy to use in older children, but aren't as accurate for very young children. The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) advises against using electronic ear thermometers for infants younger than three months.

Plastic strip thermometers (small plastic strips that you press against your child's forehead) may be able to tell you whether your child has a fever, but they aren't as reliable to taking an exact measurement.

Forehead thermometers may be a reasonable alternative to ear thermometers, if your infant is younger than a year old. They are not as accurate as oral or rectal digital thermometers.

Glass mercury thermometers were once commonly used, but the AAP now advises against using them because of concerns about possible exposure to mercury, which is an environmental toxin.

