

What is a normal temperature?

Temperature-taking: recommended techniques and normal temperatures¹

Age					Normal temperature range	
	rectal	mouth	ear	armpit	°C	°F
Birth to 2 years	First choice: 				36.6 to 38	97.9 to 100.4
	Second choice: 				34.7 to 37.3	94.5 to 99.1
2-5 years	First choice: 				36.6 to 38	97.9 to 100.4
	Second choices: 				35.8 to 38	96.4 to 100.4
					34.7 to 37.3	94.5 to 99.1
5+ years	First choice: 				35.5 to 37.5	95.9 to 99.5
	Second choices: 				35.8 to 38	96.4 to 100.4
					34.7 to 37.3	94.5 to 99.1

Putting the fever in perspective³

A LOW GRADE FEVER is a rectal reading between 38°C (100.4°F) and 39°C (102°F). This is the normal body reaction to fighting infection.

A MODERATE GRADE FEVER is a rectal reading between 39°C (102°F) and 40°C (104°F). If their temperature is in this range, you should give your child medication to bring the temperature down to low grade.

A HIGH FEVER is a rectal reading over 41°C (106°F). At this point, you should give your child medication to bring down the fever and see your doctor. Fevers are only harmful if they are above 42.3°C (108°F).

Children under 2 months with a rectal temperature over 38°C (100.4°F) should see a doctor.

Keep in mind:¹

The degree of a fever does not tell you how sick your child is. A child with a mild infection can have a high fever, while a child with a severe infection might have no fever at all. A better sign is how your child is acting.