

Symptoms of Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) include:

- 1) A sudden onset of high fever (above 38°C)
- 2) Dry cough
- 3) Chills and shivering
- 4) Muscle aches
- 5) Breathing difficulties.

Since the earliest symptom of SARS is a sudden onset of high fever, this booklet is to enable you to take your child's temperature correctly.

Although not everyone with fever has SARS, see a doctor if your child has a fever.

Taking Your Child's Temperature



When does your child have a fever?

Your child (below 12 years old) has a fever if:

- ◆ the armpit (axillary) temperature is over 37.2°C
- ♦ the mouth (oral) temperature is over 37.5°C
- ♦ the ear (tympanic) temperature is over 37.9°C.

How do you measure your child's body temperature?

You may use a glass thermometer, a digital thermometer or an ear (tympanic) thermometer.

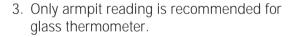
(a) Using a glass thermometer



1. Wash the thermometer with soap and water before use.

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2. Shake the thermometer a few times to bring the level of the mercury below 35°C.



4. Armpit reading:

- i) Place the thermometer under the armpit.
- ii) Fold your child's arm across the chest to hold the thermometer in place.
- iii) Read the temperature after 5 minutes.
- 5. Wash the thermometer with soap and water after use.





(b) Using a digital thermometer



- 1. Wash the area of the thermometer in contact with mouth or armpit with soap and water before use.
- 2. Switch on the thermometer, and wait for it to be ready to register a reading.
- 3. Both mouth and armpit readings are suitable for digital thermometer (please note the age groups specified below).
- 4. **Armpit reading** (for children 7 years of age and younger):
 - i) Place the thermometer under the armpit.
 - ii) Fold your child's arm across the chest to hold the thermometer in place.
 - iii) The thermometer will signal/beep when the temperature display is ready for reading.
 - iv) Read the temperature.
- 5. **Mouth reading** (for children older than 7 years of age):
 - i) Place the thermometer under the tongue.
 - ii) Ensure your child's lips are closed around the thermometer.
 - iii) Tell your child NOT to bite the thermometer.
 - iv) The thermometer will signal/beep when the temperature display is ready for
- reading.
- v) Read the temperature.
- 6. Wash the area of the thermometer in contact with mouth or armpit with soap and water after use.





(c) Using an ear (tympanic) thermometer



- 1. This thermometer is suitable for children 3 years of age and older.
- 2. Switch on the thermometer. When it is ready to register a reading, gently insert the thermometer's earpiece in your child's ear canal. Pull the ear gently backwards and upwards to straighten the ear canal.
- 3. Press the activation button and hold until a reading appears. (Some models may have a beep sound when it is ready for reading.)
- 4. Take the thermometer out and read the temperature.



Dos and Don'ts When Using a Thermometer

Do ...

- read the manufacturer's instructions on the proper use and the range of normal temperature readings for each type of thermometer.
- wash the glass or digital thermometer with soap and water before and after use.

Don't ...

- allow your child to bite the thermometer.
- ◆ take mouth temperature within 30 minutes of your child consuming hot and cold food and drinks.
- allow your child to talk when taking mouth temperature.
- allow your child to move about when taking armpit temperature.

What you can do if your child has a fever:

- ◆ Take your child to see a doctor.
- Give your child plenty of fluids, e.g. water, fruit juices and clear soups.
- Dress your child in light clothing.
- ◆ If your child's fever is higher than 38.5°C, sponge him/her with tap water and give paracetamol.
- Rest your child in a cool and well-ventilated room.



A word of caution:

- ◆ Do not allow your child to go to childcare centre, nursery, kindergarten, student care centre or school if he/she has a fever.
- ◆ Check that the fever has subsided for at least 24 hours before allowing your child to go out.

