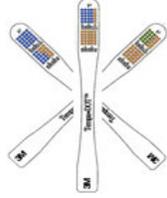


Temperature recording



Adapted from: Nicol, M; Bavin, C; Bedford-Turner, S; Cronin, P. & Rawlings-Anderson, K. (2004) **Essential Nursing Skills, 2nd Ed.** Edinburgh: Mosby.

1. Preparation

Patient

- Explain procedure, to gain consent and co-operation
- Assess patient regarding suitable site for temperature recording. If using oral site the patient should not have had a hot drink, smoked a cigarette or exercised within the previous 15 minutes
- If the patient is unconscious, confused, prone to seizures, has mouth sores or has undergone oral surgery, the oral site should not be used for temperature measurement
- The rectal site is no longer recommended except when an electronic probe is being used

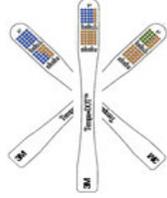
Equipment/Environment

- Disposable chemical thermometer, e.g. TempaDot
- Observation chart
- Mercury thermometers are no longer widely used as there are risks of mercury spillage in the event of a breakage. If a mercury thermometer is used it must be cleaned with an alcohol swab before and after use and the mercury must be shaken down to the bottom of the scale before use
- Electronic oral and tympanic thermometers are increasingly being used

Nurse

- Hands must be clean. The risk of contact with body fluids (saliva) is extremely low if the correct technique is followed and so no protective clothing such as apron and gloves is required unless otherwise indicated by the patient's condition, e.g. MRSA.

2. Procedure



Oral

Ask the patient to open his or her mouth, and gently insert the thermometer under the tongue, next to the frenulum. This is adjacent to a large artery (sublingual artery), so the temperature will be close to core temperature (figure 1)

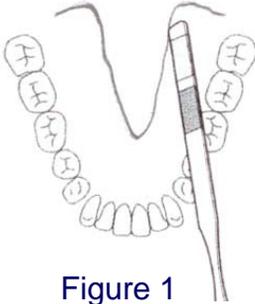


Figure 1

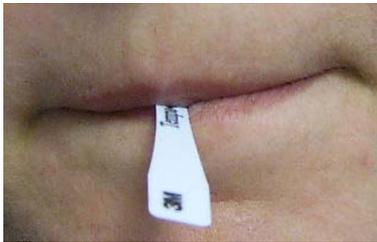


Figure 1a

- Ask the patient to close their lips, but not their teeth, around the thermometer, to prevent cool air circulating in the mouth

In adults the closed lips should touch the middle of the TempaDot logo (Figure 1a)

- Leave in position for the recommended length of time. This is usually a minimum of 1 minute but can be left longer as long as the patient is comfortable

- Remove the thermometer, taking care not to touch the part that has been in the patient's mouth. In accordance with the manufacturer's instructions, read the temperature by noting the way that the dots have changed colour (see page 3)

Axilla

Ask/assist the patient to expose their axilla (arm pit). For an accurate recording, the axilla must be dry



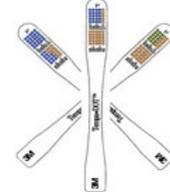
Figure 2

- With the dots facing the chest wall, position the thermometer vertically between the arm and the chest wall and ask/assist the patient to keep their arm close against the chest to ensure good contact with the skin (Figure 2)

- Leave in position for the recommended length of time (usually 3 minutes)

- In accordance with the manufacturer's instructions, read the temperature by noting the way that the dots have changed colour (see bpage 3)

Reading the thermometer



3. Post procedure

Patient

- Ensure patient comfort
- Answer any questions regarding the recording

Equipment/Environment

- Dispose of the thermometer into the clinical waste bag

Nurse

- Chart temperature recording
- Report any abnormality

To check your knowledge do a [quiz](http://www.cetl.org.uk/learning/temperature-out/temperature-quiz.html) on TempaDOT reading

<http://www.cetl.org.uk/learning/temperature-out/temperature-quiz.html>