

Preventive tips to keep you healthy... from New London Hospital.

Body Temperature

What is body temperature?

Body temperature is a measure of the body's ability to generate and get rid of heat. The body is very good at keeping its temperature within a narrow, safe range in spite of large variations in temperatures outside the body.



When you are too hot, the blood vessels in your skin expand (dilate) to carry the excess heat to your skin's surface.

You may begin to sweat, and as the sweat evaporates, it helps cool your body. When you are too cold, your blood vessels narrow (contract) so that blood flow to your skin is reduced to conserve body heat. You may start shivering, which is an involuntary, rapid contraction of the muscles. This extra muscle activity helps generate more heat. Under normal conditions, this keeps your body temperature within a narrow, safe range.

Where is body temperature measured?

Your body temperature can be measured in many locations on your body. The mouth, ear, armpit, and rectum are the most commonly used places. Temperature can also be measured on your forehead.

What is normal body temperature?

Most people think of a "normal" body temperature as an oral temperature of 98.6°F. This is an average of normal body temperatures. Your temperature may actually be 1°F (0.6°C) or more above or below 98.6°F.

What is a fever?

In most adults, an oral temperature above 100°F or a rectal or ear temperature above 101°F is considered a fever. A child has a fever when his or her rectal temperature is 100.4°F or higher.



Note: This is for information purposes only and not intended for use in place of the advice of a healthcare provider.