# Temperature, Axillary (Digital Thermometer)

## Purpose

The purpose of this procedure is to measure the resident’s body temperature.

## Preparation

1. Review the resident’s care plan to assess for any special needs of the resident.
2. Assemble the equipment and supplies as needed.

## General Guidelines

1. The axillary temperature is taken under the resident’s arm.
2. The thermometer should be in the center of the resident’s axilla and held upright between the arm and the chest.
3. Never leave the resident while taking an axillary temperature.
4. If the resident is unconscious or weak you will need to hold the thermometer in place.
5. When recording the axillary temperature, place an “AX” in front of the figures.
6. If the resident’s temperature is 100°F or greater, it should be taken at least every four (4) hours until it returns to normal.
7. Temperatures below 97°F and above 99°F must be rechecked with another thermometer and must be reported to the Nurse Supervisor.

## Equipment and Supplies

The following equipment and supplies will be necessary when performing this procedure:

1. Digital thermometer;
2. Plastic disposable probe cover (sheath);
3. Paper and pencil or pen;
4. Tissue or paper towels; and
5. Personal protective equipment (e.g., gowns, gloves, mask, etc., as needed).

## Steps in the Procedure

1. Wash and dry your hands thoroughly before beginning the procedure.
2. Place the equipment on the bedside stand or overbed table. Arrange the supplies so that they can be easily reached.
3. Fold the top covers down enough to remove the resident’s arm from his or her pajama or gown sleeve.
4. If the armpit is moist, pat it dry with a paper towel. Discard the towel into the trash receptacle.
5. Remove the probe from its stored position.
6. Insert the probe into the probe cover (sheath).
7. Place the tip of the probe in the center of the resident’s armpit. The thermometer should be in an upright position between the armpit and chest.
8. Place the arm holding the thermometer across the resident’s chest or abdomen.
9. If the resident is unconscious or too weak to hold the thermometer in place, you will need to hold it in place for the resident.
10. Wait until the digital reading is displayed (usually 15 seconds).
11. Remove the probe from the resident’s armpit.
12. Record the temperature reading. Place an “AX” in front of the figures. Do not replace the probe until you have recorded the temperature—the reading will automatically return to zero when placed in its holder.

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Steps in the Procedure (continued)

13. Discard the used probe cover (sheath) into the designated container. Do not touch the sheath.
14. Return the probe into its stored position.
15. Put the resident’s arm back in his or her pajama or gown sleeve.
16. Reposition the bed covers. Make the resident comfortable.
17. Place the call light within easy reach of the resident.
18. If the resident desires, return the door and curtains to the open position and if visitors are waiting, tell them they may now enter the room.
19. Wash and dry your hands thoroughly.

Documentation

The following information should be recorded in the resident’s medical record:

1. The date and time the temperature was measured.
2. The name and title of the individual(s) who measured the temperature.
3. That the resident’s temperature was axillary.
4. The temperature reading.
5. If the resident refused the procedure, the reason(s) why and the intervention taken.
6. The signature and title of the person recording the data.

Reporting

1. Notify the supervisor if the resident refuses the procedure.
2. Report other information in accordance with facility policy and professional standards of practice.

References

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<tr>
<th>MDS (RAPs)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Survey Tag Numbers</td>
<td>n/a</td>
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<td>Related Documents</td>
<td>Vital Signs and Weight Record (Appendix A)</td>
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<td>Risk of Exposure</td>
<td>Blood–Body Fluids–Infectious Diseases–Air Contaminants–Hazardous Chemicals</td>
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