

## Patient instructions for measuring basal body temperature

### INTRODUCTION

Your body temperature reflects your metabolic rate, which is largely determined by hormones secreted by the thyroid gland and by the ability of your cells to convert these hormones to their more active form. Your level of thyroid activity can be determined simply by measuring your basal body temperature. For this test, it is best to use a basal thermometer (you can find this at most pharmacies), which is more accurate than a digital or oral thermometer.

### PROCEDURE

1. Place the thermometer by your bed before going to sleep at night.
2. On waking, place the basal thermometer in your armpit for a **full 10 minutes**. It is important to make as little movement as possible. Lying and resting with your eyes closed is best. Do not get up until 10 minutes have passed.
3. After 10 minutes, read and record the temperature and date in the table below.
4. Record the temperature for **10 days in a row** (preferably at the same time of day) and give the information to your physician.

*Menstruating women must perform the test starting on the third day after onset of menstruation. Men and postmenopausal women can perform the test at any time.*

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date	Temperature
<b>AVERAGE TEMPERATURE:</b>	

## **INTERPRETATION**

Your basal body temperature should be between 36.4°C and 36.8°C (97.8-98.2°F).

Low basal body temperatures (below 36.1°C / 97.0°F) are quite common and may reflect hypothyroidism. Common signs and symptoms of hypothyroidism are:

- depression
- difficulty in losing weight
- dry skin
- headaches
- lethargy or fatigue
- menstrual problems
- recurrent infections
- sensitivity to cold.

High basal body temperatures (above 37.2°C / 99.0°F) are less common, but may be evidence of hyperthyroidism. Common signs and symptoms of hyperthyroidism include:

- bulging eyeballs
- fast pulse
- hyperactivity
- inability to gain weight
- insomnia
- irritability
- menstrual problems
- nervousness.