

FACTFILE: GCSE HOME ECONOMICS: Child Development



Caring for a sick child

Learning Outcomes

Students should be able to:

- Discuss the following factors to consider when caring for a sick child at home:
 - the types of thermometer used to take temperature;
 - how to administer medication;
 - how to provide a comfortable environment.



Caring for a sick child





A normal temperature in babies and children is about 36.4C. A fever is usually considered to be a temperature of 38C or above.

There are five types of thermometer available to parents and carers:

1. Digital thermometer
2. Ear thermometer
3. Non contact thermometer
4. Strip thermometer
5. Smart thermometer (App based)



Thermometer Type	Description
Digital	These are an accurate and easy way to take a child's temperature. The thermometer is placed either in the mouth or under the armpit for 15 seconds and then the temperature can be read from the display monitor by the parent / carer. These thermometers are widely available.

Thermometer Type	Description
 <p>Ear Thermometer</p>	<p>This thermometer is placed inside the ear to provide an accurate and rapid temperature reading from the ear. The thermometer measures the infrared heat generated by the eardrum and the surrounding tissue to reflect the users body temperature accurately. These are more expensive to buy and can give an inaccurate reading if the probe is not inserted into the ear fully.</p>
 <p>Non Contact Thermometer</p>	<p>These work by taking an infrared reading from the forehead. The parent / carer simply holds the thermometer between 10-15cm away from the forehead to obtain a reading which will be displayed digitally. This thermometer enables temperatures to be taken without physical contact.</p>
 <p>Strip Thermometer</p>	<p>This thermometer is held against the forehead to take a temperature reading. However, this can give a false reading as it measures the temperature of the skin, rather than the body.</p>
 <p>Smart Thermometer</p>	<p>Smart thermometers, involve a small sticker or wearable patch being placed under the armpit. The monitor then syncs to an app on a smartphone, allowing parent to monitor their temperature continuously and accurately over a period of time. The Smart thermometer can also send notifications to their mobile phone if the child's temperature has increased e.g. through the night.</p>

Class Activity:

Research the price range, reviews, advantages and disadvantages of the five thermometers and provide your group's opinion on the best buy for parents.



How to administer medicine to children

It is important that children are given their medication correctly so that their condition can be managed effectively.

Parents and carers should:

- Read the medicine's instructions carefully, to make sure the correct dose is given. The instructions will also explain if it should be given before or after food.
- Check that the medicine is within its use by date.
- Keep the medicine in the original box so that storage instructions can be followed accurately.
- Store the medicine out of reach of children.
- Experiment with a variety of spoons and syringes to find the method that is least stressful for the child.

The majority of medicine for children is in a liquid form, which can make it harder to administer, as they may not like the taste!

Using <https://www.gosh.nhs.uk/medical-information/giving-your-child-medicines> discuss 10 top tips for giving medicine.

Providing a comfortable environment

The media clip discusses some of the advice parents should follow when looking after a sick child.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t4-s4z2gAWU>

Parents and carers should:

- Keep the room airy by opening a window so that it does not become too warm. If the room is too warm, they will probably feel worse.
- Give the child plenty to drink. To make drinks more appealing, ice cubes or straws could be used.
- It is normal for a child to lose their appetite during a period of illness. Parents / carers should offer foods that they know they will enjoy to encourage them to eat.
- Try to give the child time for quiet games, stories, company and comfort.
- Sick children get very tired and need plenty of rest. Encourage the child to doze off when they need to, perhaps by reading them a story or playing music.
- Never fall asleep with a sick baby on the sofa as this increases the chances of sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS).

References:

www.publichealth.hscni.net/publications/birth-five

www.nhs.uk/conditions/pregnancy-and-baby/how-to-take-your-babys-temperature/

