**NI Maternity Nursing Course**

**Clinical Skills Procedure**

**Name of the Procedure and Rubric: Taking Temperature**

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| **Step** | **Procedure (Oral Temperature)** | **Yes** | **No** | **Remarks** |
|  | Take informed consent from the patient.  (Inform about what, why, and how of the procedure) |  |  |  |
|  | Provide privacy (pull curtains, or close the door if the patient is comfortable with it). |  |  |  |
|  | Wash your hands. |  |  |  |
|  | Use an appropriate thermometer.  (Read the instructions on the device on how to use it.) |  |  |  |
|  | For mercury thermometer, shake the thermometer such that the mercury level drops below 98.6 degree Fahrenheit.  For a digital thermometer, turn it on . |  |  |  |
|  | Place the thermometer in the mouth under the tongue and instruct the patient to keep the mouth closed.  **Instruct the patient not to bite down on the thermometer to prevent it from breaking, if you are using a glass thermometer with mercury in it. Mercury is poisonous if consumed.** |  |  |  |
|  | Leave the thermometer in place for as long as is indicated by the device manufacturer. |  |  |  |
|  | Then read the thermometer and explain the result to the patient |  |  |  |
|  | Wash your hands. |  |  |  |
|  | Document the assessment findings on the patient’s file. |  |  |  |

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| **Step** | **Procedure (Axillary Temperature)** | **Yes** | **No** | **Remarks** |
|  | Take informed consent from the patient.  (Inform about what, why, and how of the procedure) |  |  |  |
|  | Provide privacy (pull curtains, or close the door if the patient is comfortable with it). |  |  |  |
|  | Wash your hands. |  |  |  |
|  | Use an appropriate thermometer.  (Read the instructions on the device on how to use it.) |  |  |  |
|  | For mercury thermometer, shake the thermometer such that the mercury level drops below 98.6 degree Fahrenheit.  For a digital thermometer, turn it on . |  |  |  |
|  | Place the thermometer in the patient’s armpit. |  |  |  |
|  | Leave the thermometer in place for as long as is indicated by the device manufacturer. |  |  |  |
|  | Then read the thermometer and explain the result to the patient.  (Usually 1ºC lower than oral temperature.) |  |  |  |
|  | Wash your hands. |  |  |  |
|  | Document the assessment findings on the patient’s file. |  |  |  |

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| **Step** | **Procedure (Tympanic -Ear Temperature)** | **Yes** | **No** | **Remarks** |
|  | Take informed consent from the patient.  (Inform about what, why, and how of the procedure) |  |  |  |
|  | Provide privacy (pull curtains, or close the door if the patient is comfortable with it). |  |  |  |
|  | Wash your hands. |  |  |  |
|  | Use an appropriate thermometer.  (Read the instructions on the device on how to use it.) |  |  |  |
|  | For a digital thermometer, turn it on. |  |  |  |
|  | Do not force the thermometer into the ear and do not occlude the ear canal.  (The tympanic membrane shares the same vascular artery that perfuses the hypothalamus.) |  |  |  |
|  | Leave the thermometer in place for as long as is indicated by the device manufacturer. |  |  |  |
|  | Then read the thermometer and explain the result to the patient  (Usually 0.3°C to 0.6°C higher than an oral temperature.) |  |  |  |
|  | Wash your hands. |  |  |  |
|  | Document the assessment findings on the patient’s file. |  |  |  |

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| **Step** | **Procedure (Rectal Temperature)** | **Yes** | **No** | **Remarks** |
|  | Review the need for rectal temperature. |  |  |  |
|  | Take informed consent from the patient.  (Explain procedure to patient ) |  |  |  |
|  | Provide privacy (pull curtains, or close the door if the patient is comfortable with it). |  |  |  |
|  | Wash your hands and don clean gloves. |  |  |  |
|  | Patient should be laying on the left side with the top leg bent over the bottom. |  |  |  |
|  | Use an appropriate thermometer.  (Read the instructions on the device ). |  |  |  |
|  | For a digital thermometer, turn it on. |  |  |  |
|  | Lubricate the thermometer with petroleum jelly. |  |  |  |
|  | Insert the lubricated thermometer 1/2 to 1 inch (1.3 to 2.5 centimeters) into the rectum. Or,  Insert the thermometer as directed in the instructions for the device. |  |  |  |
|  | Leave the thermometer in place for as long as is indicated by the device manufacturer. |  |  |  |
|  | Read the thermometer and explain the result to patient  (Usually 0.3°C to 0.6°C higher than an oral temperature.) |  |  |  |
|  | Dispose of the thermometer as directed in the instruction for the device. |  |  |  |
|  | Dispose of the gloves and wash your hands. |  |  |  |
|  | Document the assessment findings on the patient’s file. |  |  |  |

Reference:

Doyle, G. R., & McCutcheon, J. (2015). *Clinical Procedures for Safer Patient Care.* Published by BCCampus licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution 3.0 Unported](http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/3.0/) license. Retrieved from: <https://opentextbc.ca/clinicalskills/chapter/vital-signs/>

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