



The Basal Temperature Test

First described by the great physician Broda Barnes in 1945, the basal temperature test provides an extremely valuable screening test for metabolic function. The idea is to obtain the temperature immediately on waking, when it reflects most accurately your body temperature at rest.

I think that the best thermometer to use is the old fashioned – and perfectly good and accurate – glass mercury thermometer. In this day and age, where time is at a premium, a reading from under the tongue is probably the most convenient. Dr Broda Barnes always recommended that the temperature should be taken under the armpit; you will probably find that the readings are a little lower than those under the tongue and you should make a ½ degree allowance upwards if it is taken in the armpit. If you are using an electric thermometer, you should be aware that some will tend to under read in the armpit because they don't have time to warm up enough before the electronics make the reading. So use the under the tongue route if your thermometer is electric. The ear thermometers are quick, if rather expensive, and I am not convinced of their accuracy. Make sure the thermometer works properly; check it against another.

Three minutes in the mouth immediately on waking, before you get out of bed – having shaken it down **the night before**, and made sure it really has zeroed. You don't necessarily have to read it straight away – one may be a bit bleary first thing – but when you do, write it all down there and then. Ideally I would like the basal temperature to be taken in the evening as well. A lowering of temperature during the day may indicate low adrenal reserve.

Make sure that you don't have a cold or flu coming on, or that you don't have a sore throat or sinus infection, or dental abscess – all these things will raise your temperature and make the basal reading invalid. You will remember that if you are of the fair sex, you have a five or six day window from the beginning of your period each month in which to take your temperature, starting on day 2. Your normal basal temperature should be above 97.6° F / 36.8° C. The correct figures are 98.4° F or 37° C. Below the lower limit of the range, it is more than likely that you have a lowered metabolism due to hypothyroidism. The only other causes of temperatures below these limits are malnutrition, liver failure, hypothermia and alcoholism. If you have had “a good drink” the night before, discount your temperature in the morning.

It's useful at the same time to take your pulse as a base line, since on successful treatment a rise of pulse may be the first signal of success. It is well worth doing it for two or three weeks and averaging it all out.