

## **Patient Instructions for Measuring Basal Body Temperature (BBT)**

### **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. All that is needed is a high-quality thermometer.

### **Procedure**

1. Place the thermometer by your bed before going to sleep at night. If using a mercury thermometer, shake it down to below 95°F.
2. On waking, place the 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 the 10 minute test is completed (unless using digital thermometer).
3. After 10 minutes, read and record the temperature and date.
4. Record the temperature for at least three mornings (preferably at the same time of day) and give the information to your physician. *Menstruating women must perform the test on the second, third, and fourth days of menstruation.* Men and postmenopausal women can perform the test at any time.

### **Interpretation**

Your basal body temperature should be between 97.6°F and 98.2°F(36.6-36.8°C). Low basal body temperatures 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 98.6F) 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