

How to Tell If a Dog Has a Fever Without a Thermometer

Is your dog acting out of the ordinary, and you want to know if he's got a fever? Good thinking! Not sure quite how to do that? It's easy! Here are some tips to help you figure out how to do that without a thermometer.

If you don't have a thermometer, you can tell if your dog has a fever by answering the following questions:

- Are your dog's ears and paws very warm/hot to the touch?
- Does your dog have hot armpits and/or groin area?
- Is your dog's nose hot and dry?
- Are your dog's gums warm and dry?
- Is your dog lethargic?
- Is he shivering?
- Does he have colored mucus?
- Does he have no appetite?

If you answered yes to any or all of these questions, your dog might have a fever. Below is more information on how to determine what you're dealing with and how to keep an eye on your dog's health!

Can you really tell if a dog has a fever by touch?

Yes, there are plenty of touch-based signals that you can use to tell if your dog has a fever or not. After all, thermometers are computers, so they are different testing methods for temperature. From pet parents to dog professionals (groomers, vets, breeders), one of the first things they do is touch your dog in the mentioned areas above to see how they feel in relation to their own hands. If you've never done this before, you'll need to know what you are looking for and how to do it properly, of course.

The first thing is to know the difference between warm and hot as far as your dog is concerned. Get a feel for how his ears and paws usually feel. Are they slightly warmer than your hands? About the same temperature? **Make a habit of touching your dog's ears and paws regularly so that you'll know when something feels hotter than usual.**

The other thing you'll need to focus on is how you touch your dog. Your palms are the obvious way to do that, but our palms get so much touch generally that they aren't as good as detecting differences. **It's an excellent idea to try using the back of your hand or the inside of your**

wrist. These areas are more temperature-sensitive and will give you a better sense of your dog's difference in temperature as a result.

How to tell if a dog has a fever with a thermometer

If you do happen to have a thermometer, you can use it. However, your dog is not going to like it! That's right; we're talking about a rectal thermometer!

If you do want to double-check your dog's temperature, you'll need to lubricate the metal tip (using olive oil or soap) and then insert it into your dog's bum. Wait about 30 seconds (or until it beeps) and withdraw it again. After you've got the temperature, make sure that you clean it properly and mark it as a dog's rectal thermometer so that no one sticks it in their mouth!

Can you take a dog's temperature with a no-contact thermometer?

If a rectal thermometer grosses you out -- we don't blame you -- then you might be tempted to try a no-contact thermometer or perhaps a forehead thermometer. While it's an excellent thought, neither of these is going to work on your dog! **A rectal thermometer is going to be the only mechanical way to get an accurate reading of your dog's temperature!**

What is a dog's normal temperature?

Dogs typically range between 101-102.5 degrees F (38-39.1 degrees C). If they are feverish, they are above 103 degrees F (39 degrees C). Keep a close eye if your dog goes any higher since a fever above 106 degrees F (41 degrees C) can be fatal.

Any time your dog has a fever, it's a good idea to bring him to see his vet. A fever is a sign of illness that may need antibiotics or at least an expert's opinion to make sure that you protect your dog's health.

How can you tell if a dog is running a fever?

Since we don't blame you for being grossed out about the need for a rectal thermometer (ew), you'll want to do what you can to establish a possible fever with your hands! Here's what you need to know about those questions we asked above!

Warm ears, paws, armpits, and/or groin

These are the areas where your dog doesn't have fur, firstly. This gives you the best skin contact so that you can get a better read on their palpable temperature. Since humans are only a few degrees cooler than dogs, an average dog will feel about the same, whereas a feverish dog will feel noticeably hot to the touch in those areas.

A hot and dry nose/gums

When your dog's nose and gums are dry and hot, they are dehydrated, and their bodies are busy fighting off something. Please note that a warm nose is different than a hot nose (more on that later). Hot or dry gums are best noted by them feeling hot and "squeaky" (aka dry) to your touch. Be gentle!

Lethargy and lack of appetite

When your dog has a fever, his body is busy trying to fight off illness. This means that he will be tired and sleeping a lot. He'll be lethargic to the point where he might not even want to play. As well, he may not have an appetite. **Some find that their dog is cranky and doesn't like to be touched, either.** These are all signs that his body is hard at work and not feeling great.

Is he shivering?

Just like humans, dogs will shiver when they have a fever. They will go back and forth between overheating and feeling cold, leading them to have the shakes. If you notice this, it, too, means that your dog's immune system is hard at work. It may be persistent shivering, and it might be in fits and starts.

Does he have colored mucus?

A runny nose is often typical, but discharge that is colored mucus is a sign of an infection or virus of some sort. You may notice it just from his nose or perhaps from his eyes, too. This is a bit rarer, though, since colored eye discharge is often associated with an eye infection! Your dog may be sneezing, too!

Does a warm nose on a dog mean fever?

If you notice that your dog has a warm nose, it's common to assume they immediately has a fever. This is especially true since it's listed above! However, a warm (not hot) nose does not necessarily mean that your dog has a fever. The same goes for if a warm nose is the only problem you notice and the other symptoms don't apply. A warm nose on your dog can mean:

- Dehydration
- Weather
- Sunburn
- Your dog just woke up from a nap

Many pet parents will panic immediately when they feel their dog's nose and see that it is warm and dry instead of cold and wet, but it isn't immediately a cause for concern. It's definitely a

good idea to check for these other symptoms, of course, but a warm nose is not immediately a fever!

We all want to make sure that our dogs are healthy and happy. These signs will help you to see whether or not your dog has a fever so that you can bring him to see the vet to determine what's going on. Know someone who's worried about their dog's health? Share this with them to help them know what to look for!

TLDR

You can tell a dog has a fever without a thermometer by touching their ears, paws, armpits, groin, nose, and gums to see if they feel hot and dry to the touch. Other fever indicators include lethargy, lack of appetite, shivering, and colored mucus. Knowing how to do it with and without a rectal thermometer will help you to properly care for your dog no matter what!