

# CLINICAL ALERT

Quality and Safety

Alert No: 4

Date: 15/05/26

## Clinical Alert

**Infrared thermometers are not to be used with our adult patients**



**BRAUN**

Dear Colleague,

**Infrared thermometers are not to be used with our adult patients because of the following:**

### 1. Accuracy concerns

- Many infrared thermometers on the market are not designed for medical purposes and may not provide accurate readings.
- Inaccurate readings can lead to misdiagnosis or missed diagnosis of fever, which is critical in patient care.
- Environmental conditions, such as sunlight, humidity, wind, and dust, can affect the accuracy of readings.
- Using infrared thermometers requires training and experience; an incorrect distance between the patient and the thermometer can result in false readings.

### 2. False sense of security

- Relying solely on infrared thermometers for fever screening can create a false sense of security.
- Fever is just one symptom of many illnesses, and comprehensive clinical assessments are essential for accurate diagnosis and appropriate patient management.

### 3. Patient safety

- Incorrect readings can lead to inappropriate patient management decisions.
- This can result in unnecessary isolation or delayed treatment, adversely affecting patient outcomes.

### 4. COVID-19 screening

- During the COVID-19 pandemic, the NHS identified issues with using infrared thermometers for COVID-19 screening.

- The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) emphasised a risk-based approach, incorporating screening, triage, and testing, rather than relying solely on temperature checks.

## Recommendations

### Use these thermometers:

- Covidien Genius 3 Tympanic.
- Welch Allyn Thermoscan Pro 6000.

### Why ear thermometers?

- Accurate and reliable.
- Measure the tympanic membrane (eardrum) temperature.
- Shares the blood supply with the hypothalamus.

### For Children's Services

- NICE recommends infrared tympanic thermometers for children aged 4 weeks to 5 years.
- Explore alternative recommendations if necessary.
- These are only to be procured via oracle using the following codes FWH237 and FWH157

For more information: [Visit MHRA guidance on infrared thermometers](#)

Kind regards,  
The Trust Medical Devices Team



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**We respect**  
**We are inclusive**

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