*Everyone* knows that 98.60 F (37.00 C) is the normal human body temperature. But is that actually correct, and – come to think of it – how does *everyone* know that in the first place?

A German physician named Carl Reinhold August Wunderlich is generally credited with originating this idea, which was based on – reportedly – more than one million axiliary temperature readings taken from 25,000 subjects and was published in his 1868 book [*Das Verhalten der Eigenwärme in Krankheiten*](https://books.google.com/?id=HGwEtl2gRoAC) (which translates to *The Behavior of the Self-Warmth in Diseases*). But was he correct? History tells that his thermometer was a foot long and took 20 minutes to determine a subject’s temperature. For a measure that is used so often to determine general health, it would be a good idea to use modern instruments to confirm or refute his results.

In 1992, three physicians from the University of Maryland School of Medicine set out to do just that, measuring body temperatures for 223 healthy men and women aged 18-40 one to four times a day for three consecutive days using an electronic digital thermometer. The mean body temperature was computed for each individual, and this summary measure is recorded in the Bodytemp.csv dataset.

Source: Mackowiak, P. A., Wasserman, S. S., and Levine, M. M. (1992), "A Critical Appraisal of 98.6 Degrees F, the Upper Limit of the Normal Body Temperature, and Other Legacies of Carl Reinhold August Wunderlich," Journal of the American Medical Association\_, 268, 1578-1580.

Data Dictionary:

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| --- | --- | --- |
| Variable Name | Description | Details |
| ID | Participant ID | Numeric [ID] |
| Body\_temp | Body temperature | Numeric [0F] |