



Math Study Strategies

Nursing Math

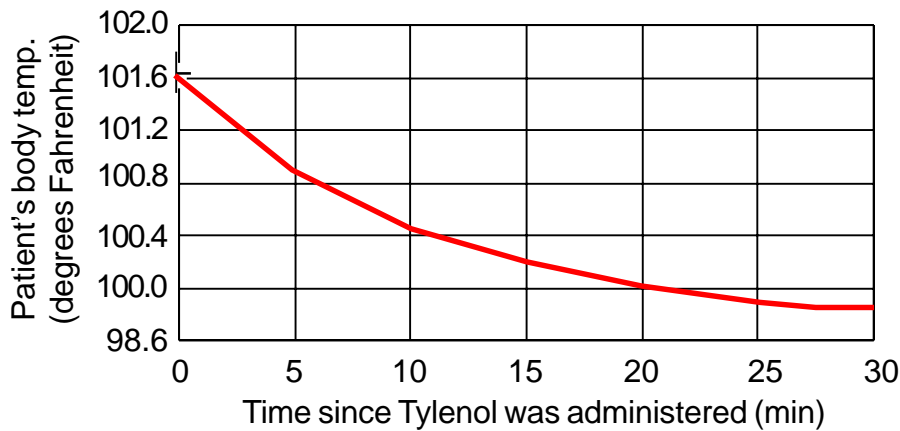


Reading Line Graphs

A line graph is useful for showing trends or changes over a period of time. A line graph shows the relationship between two parameters (example: the change in the patient's temperature during a day or week; the patient's body weight related to time periods; the patient's blood pressure during a day).

A nurse administers Tylenol to lower a patient's fever. The graph below shows the decrease in the patient's body temperature with respect to time. The horizontal axis expresses the time since the Tylenol was administered and the vertical axis expresses the patient's temperature.

Patient's Body Temperature Versus Time



When reading a line graph, keep in mind the following steps:

Step 1

Read the title of the graph and determine what is being compared.

Step 2

Read the labels of the horizontal and vertical axis to find what they represent.

Step 3

Determine the scale, or the units, used along the axis (ex feet or inches, degrees Celsius or degrees Fahrenheit, pounds or kilograms, etc.).

Step 4

Find a specific value by moving along the horizontal axis until you get to the desired unit. Go up on the line graph and then across to find the value on the vertical axis.