

HOW TO TAKE YOUR PULSE: DETERMINING PULSE RATE

PATIENT/FAMILY INFORMATION SHEET

What is a pulse rate?

A pulse rate is the number of times your heart beats per minute (also called heart rate). A normal heart beats approximately 60-100 times per minute at rest. Each heart beat forces blood into the arteries.

What factors affect the pulse rate?

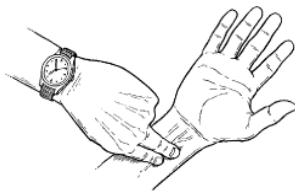
The following are examples that may affect your pulse rate:

- Gender
- Emotions
- Exercise
- Humidity
- Age
- Illness
- Medications
- Digestion
- Body Temperature
- Body Position

How do you take a radial pulse?

The radial artery is the preferred choice for checking the pulse. To take the radial pulse, follow the steps below:

1. Sit down and relax for five minutes before taking a “resting” pulse.
2. Gently place your index and middle fingers over the radial artery in the groove of the wrist on the thumb side to feel a pulsation.
3. Count the pulsations for a full 60 seconds to determine the heart rate per minute.



****Some individuals find it difficult to feel the pulse and accurately measure the pulse rate. In this situation, a pulse monitor can be purchased at most sporting good stores and some drug stores. If you plan to record your pulse rate during exercise, a pulse monitor may be helpful**

Reference: American College of Sports Medicine. (2004). ACSM's Health-related Physical Fitness Assessment Manual. Philadelphia, PA: Lippincott, Williams, & Wilkins.

For more Patient Information, see the Greenwich Hospital website at www.greenhosp.org and click on Patients & Visitors, then Patient Education.