

Taking a pulse (heart rate)

Your pulse is the rate at which your heart beats. As your heart pumps blood through your body, you can feel a throbbing in some of the arteries close to the skin's surface. The two arteries that are easiest to use for taking your pulse are the:

- Radial artery, located on the palm side of your wrist in line with your thumb.
- Carotid artery, located on either side of the windpipe in your neck.

To take your pulse, place two fingers gently on the artery. Do not use your thumb because it has its own pulse that you may feel. Count the beats for 30 seconds; then double the result to get the number of beats per minute.

The usual resting pulse for an adult is 50 to 100 beats per minute. Certain illnesses can cause your pulse to change, so it is helpful to know what your resting pulse is when you are well. To obtain your resting pulse, count your pulse after you have been sitting or resting quietly for at least 10 minutes.





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