



Pulse

Your pulse is the number of times your heart beats per minute (bpm). Every time your heart beats, it pushes blood through your arteries. Your heart relaxes between beats. This is why you feel rhythmic pressure when feeling your pulse.

Normal pulse rate at rest for adults (ages 18 years and older): 60 to 100 bpm.

What can affect your pulse?

- Body positioning: Your pulse changes as your heart responds to pump more or less blood through your body, depending on your movement.
- Emotions: Nervousness, stress, or extreme emotions can affect the pulse
- Medications: Some medications affect your pulse
- Air temperature: Higher temperatures and higher humidity levels can raise your pulse
- Body size: Obesity can be linked to an elevated pulse.
- Athletic status: Athletes can sometimes have lower heart rates that are under 60 bpm.



How to Take a Pulse

Check your pulse on your wrist

1. Turn one arm so your palm is facing up.
2. Place the middle three fingers of your other hand in the upper groove of your upturned wrist, below where your thumb connects to your wrist.
3. Press firmly. You should feel a subtle, pulsing (beating or throbbing) sensation. If you can't feel anything, apply more pressure with the tips of your fingers.
4. Count each pulse you feel for 30 seconds using a clock or stopwatch.
5. Double the number of pulses you counted. This equals your heart rate in beats per minute (bpm).

Check your pulse on your neck

1. Place your index finger and middle finger on the side of your neck. They should go in the groove under your jaw and next to your windpipe.
2. Press firmly until you feel a pulse, which is a subtle, pulsing (beating or throbbing) sensation. If you can't feel it, move your fingers around slightly and increase pressure until you do.
3. Count each pulse you feel for 30 seconds using a clock or stopwatch.
4. Double the number of pulses you counted to get your heart rate.

