# Radial Pulse, Measuring

## Purpose
The purpose of this procedure is to determine the resident’s heart rate and rhythm.

## Preparation
1. Review the resident’s care plan to assess for any special needs of the resident.
2. Assemble the equipment and supplies as needed.

## General Guidelines
1. The normal pulse rate beat for an adult is from 60 to 90 beats per minute.
2. When you have found the pulse, notice how regular the beat is (rhythm), how weak or strong the beat is, and the number of beats per minute (rate).
3. Unless otherwise instructed, report any pulse rate under 60 and over 100 to the Nurse Supervisor promptly.

## Equipment and Supplies
The following equipment and supplies will be necessary when performing this procedure:
1. Watch (with second hand);
2. Paper and pencil or pen; and
3. Personal protective equipment (e.g., gowns, gloves, mask, etc., as needed).

## Steps in the Procedure
1. Wash and dry your hands thoroughly before beginning the procedure.
2. Place the equipment on the bedside stand or overbed table. Arrange the supplies so that they can be easily reached.
3. If the resident is standing, instruct the resident to sit in a chair or on the edge of the bed.
4. Be sure the resident’s hand and arm are well-supported and resting comfortably.
5. Find the pulse by:
   a. Placing the tips of your first three fingers on the thumb side of the resident’s wrist. Do not use your thumb.
   b. Align the fingers in line with the resident’s thumb.
   c. Press lightly until you find the pulse.
6. Measure the pulse by:
   a. Looking at the second hand on the watch. (Note: If counting for 60 seconds, count all beats for the full 60 seconds. If counting for 30 seconds, multiply the count by 2.)
   b. Start counting when you first feel the pulse.
7. Should the resident’s pulse be irregular, count the beats for one full minute (60 seconds).
8. Record the pulse rate on the paper.
9. Reposition the bed covers. Make the resident comfortable.
10. Place the call light within easy reach of the resident.
11. If the resident desires, return the door and curtains to the open position and if visitors are waiting, tell them they may now enter the room.
12. Wash and dry your hands thoroughly.

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**Documentation**

The following information should be recorded in the resident’s medical record:

1. The date and time the pulse was measured.
2. The name and title of the individual(s) who measured the pulse.
3. The pulse rate and that it was taken radially.
4. If the pulse rate was weak or strong.
5. If the pulse rate was regular or irregular (rhythm).
6. If the resident refused the treatment, the reason(s) why and the intervention taken.
7. The signature and title of the person recording the data.

**Reporting**

1. Notify the supervisor if the resident refuses the procedure.
2. Report other information in accordance with facility policy and professional standards of practice.

**References**

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