



Why you should take your pulse.

By feeling and counting your pulse, you will know if your heart is beating regularly and how many times per minute it beats. This is important because when you go home you will slowly be increasing your activities and taking heart medications. Taking your pulse will tell you how your heart is responding to the increase in activity and medication.

When do you take your pulse?

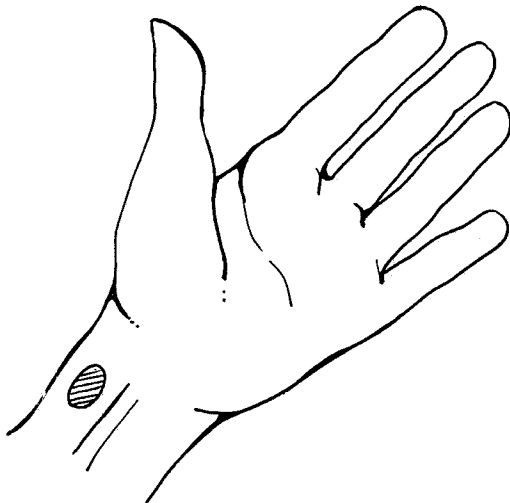
If you are taking your pulse to see how your heart is responding to exercise, take it during and right after you are done. Keep taking your pulse every three (3) to five (5) minutes until it returns to normal. Your heart beat should return to normal within five (5) to ten (10) minutes.

If checking your pulse before taking your

heart medication, take it at the same time every day and always at rest. **DO NOT** take it if you have just gone up or down stairs, walked any distance, or carried anything.

Where is your pulse?

The most common pulse taken is the radial pulse. It is found on the inside of your lower arm about one (1) to two (2) inches below the base of your thumb.



How to take your pulse.

Turn you hand over so your palm is facing the ceiling. Take the fingertips of the second and third fingers *(not your thumb) of your other hand and place them at the base of the thumb where you will be taking your pulse. Now slowly move your fingers down the inside of your wrist about one (1) to two (2) inches. Push down gently. You should feel your pulse. If not, move your fingertips a little until you can feel your pulse.

**Your thumb has its own pulse. Using it may make it hard to find your radial pulse.*

Call your doctor if:

You notice a difference (from normal) in the heart rhythm and/or number of beats per minute, **especially** if you have other symptoms such as: chest pain, shortness of breath, cold, clammy skin, or heavy sweating.