

VITAL SIGNS

12 Read the text and decide if the sentences below are true (T) or false (F). Justify your choice.

1. Four primary vital signs include body temperature, blood pressure, pulse and oxygen saturations.
2. Taking the observations regularly is very important, because it helps to find out possible diseases.
3. Children have a slower pulse than adults.
4. Dizziness may be a symptom of hypotension.
5. Respiratory rate is measured with special equipment.
6. A patient who suffers from pyrexia is afebrile.

T / F

T / F

T / F

T / F

T / F

T / F

Vital signs (also called observations) are measurements of the basic body functions. They are taken on admission to assess the patient's general physical condition. In case of patients who have to stay on a ward nurses record their vital signs regularly, several times a day. It is necessary, because clinical observations can help to detect and monitor various medical problems (e.g. an infection). For this reason it is also very important to record the vital signs of postoperative patients. Four main vital signs include pulse, blood pressure, respiratory rate and body temperature.

Pulse is the heart rate, i.e. the number of times the heart beats per minute. In a healthy person the resting heart rate is 70–80 beats per minute. Elevated pulse rate is called tachycardia (over 100 bpm). Pulse which is too slow is called bradycardia (under 60 bpm). Pulse rate is higher in children than in adults. It may also be higher due to physical effort, emotions, and of course an illness.

Pulse is usually measured by putting the first and second fingertip on the person's wrist (on the radial artery) and counting the number of beats for a minute. The pulse can also be checked at the lower part of the neck (carotid pulse). If the patient's pulse is too weak to be felt with fingers it may be necessary to listen to it with a stethoscope.

When taking the pulse we measure not only its rate, but also the strength of the pulse and the rhythm of the heart. The pulse should be regular, strong and easily palpated in a healthy person. If the pulse is pounding or thready it is an indication of a possible health problem. Irregular pulse may be a symptom of arrhythmia.

Blood pressure (BP) is the force that pushes blood against the walls of arteries and carries it to all parts of the body. There are two parts of a blood pressure reading. The higher value is systolic pressure; it reflects the moment when the heart contracts and pushes blood out to the rest of the body. The lower value is the diastolic pressure, which reflects the moment when the heart is resting between beats and filling with blood. Both the systolic and diastolic pressures are recorded in "mmHg" (millimeters of mercury) – e.g. 120/80 mmHg.

armpit pachą

arrhythmia arytmia

axillary pachowy

brachial ramienny

carotid szyjny

chart karta

deterioration pogorszenie

diastolic rozkurczowy

dizziness zawroty głowy

elevated podwyższony

to faint mdleć

fever gorączka

heart rate tętno, puls

hyperthermia hipertermia

hypothermia hipotermia

inflatable cuff nadmuchiwany mankiet

to monitor monitorować, obserwować

on admission przy przyjęciu

to palpate obmacywać, badać palpacją

perspiration pocenie się

pneumonia zapalenie płuc

pyrexia gorączka

radial artery tętnica promieniowa

resting spoczynkowy

saturation saturacja, nasycenie

(to) shiver drzeć; dreszcz

shortness of breath duszności

sphygmomanometer

sfigmomanometr

systolic skurczowy

vital signs parametry życiowe