

# Physiological disorders

## Taking general measurements

# General measurements

General measurements taken to investigate physiological disorders must be reliable, valid and accurate.

It is important to:

- understand the test to make sure the correct information is collected
- use accurate equipment and understand how to use it safely
- use the correct technique (following clinical guidelines)
- explain the procedure to the service user, answer questions and provide reassurance.

# Pulse rate

- The pulse is a wave of pressure caused by blood being pumped through the arteries by the heart. It measures how fast the heart is beating and it can be felt in any artery.
- It is usual to take the pulse at the radial artery in the wrist.  
In unconscious people, the carotid artery in the neck can be used.
- The average adult resting pulse rate is usually between 70 and 80 beats per minute.
- Babies and young children normally have a faster pulse rate than adults.

# Respiration rate

The respiration rate is the number of times a person takes a breath in one minute. Respiration rates can be measured by:

- observing and counting the number of times a person's chest rises and falls in one minute
- putting your cheek close to the person's nose and mouth and counting the number of breaths you feel on your cheek in one minute.

A healthy adult's breathing rate is usually around 16-18 breaths per minute.

Babies and young children have a faster breathing rate.