

Skills Checklist: Counting Apical-Radial Pulse & Using Pulse Oximeter

Nursing Assistant's Name:

Reviewer Name:

Procedure Steps	Performed	Performed, but needs improvement	Did not Perform
Counting Apical-Radial Pulse			
Carry out Initial Steps			
Feedback			
Clean stethoscope earpieces and bell or diaphragm with disinfectant			
Feedback			
Place stethoscope earpieces in your ears with tips facing slightly forward for better fit			
Feedback			
Place stethoscope diaphragm or bell over apex of patient's heart. If cold, warm the diaphragm with your hands before placing it on patient's chest			
Feedback			
Listen carefully for heartbeat			
Feedback			
Count louder-sounding beats for one minute			
Feedback			
Check radial pulse for one minute. Best way to obtain these numbers is to have nurse count apical pulse while you take radial pulse			
Feedback			
Note results on a pad for comparison. Example: Apical pulse = 108			

Radial pulse = 82 Pulse deficit = 26 (108 - 82 = 26)			
Feedback			
Clean earpieces and bell of stethoscope with disinfectant			
Feedback			
Using a Pulse Oximeter			
Assemble equipment: – Pulse oximeter unit – Sensor appropriate to the site – Tape, if needed, to secure sensor			
Feedback			
Select and apply sensor. If sensor has position markings, align them opposite to each other to ensure an accurate reading			
Feedback			
Fasten sensor securely, or reading will not be accurate. Make sure sensor is not wrapped so tightly with tape that it restricts blood flow			
Feedback			
Attach sensor to the patient cable on pulse oximeter			
Feedback			
Turn unit on. If audio is turned on, you hear a beep with each pulse beat. Adjust volume as desired. Some units also use light bars to indicate strength of pulse. Note percentage of oxygen saturation. Inform nurse and			

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document according to facility policy			
Feedback			
Monitor patient's pulse rate. Compare with patient's actual pulse to make sure the unit is picking up each beat. Inform nurse and document according to facility policy			
Feedback			
Monitor patient's respirations and general appearance. Inform nurse and document according to facility policy. If patient's general condition changes at any time, notify nurse			
Feedback			
Carry out Last Steps			
Feedback			

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