

## TEMPERATURE, PULSE, AND RESPIRATIONS

### PURPOSE:

1. To measure body temperature.
2. To determine the quality and rate of pulse and respirations.
3. To assess change in resident's condition.

### EQUIPMENT:

1. Oral or rectal thermometer. (Electronic thermometer.)
2. Watch with second hand.
3. Stethoscope.
4. Lubricant for rectal thermometer.
5. Tissues.
6. Thermometer shields if used.
7. Paper and pen or pencil.

### PROCEDURE:

#### ORAL TEMPERATURE

**NOTE:** FOLLOW MANUFACTURER'S DIRECTIONS FOR ELECTRONIC THERMOMETER.

**NOTE:** DO NOT TAKE ORAL TEMPERATURES ON THE FOLLOWING RESIDENTS:

- A. Unconscious.
  - B. Post-operative oral surgery.
  - C. Mouth irritation or disease.
  - D. After hot or cold beverages.
  - E. After resident has been smoking.
1. Place thermometer shield on thermometer.
  2. Place thermometer under resident's tongue well back in the mouth. Instruct resident to close mouth but not to bite down on thermometer.
  3. Allow thermometer to remain in mouth per manufacturer's directions.
  4. Count pulse and respirations while thermometer registers.
  5. Remove thermometer from mouth.
  6. Read and record temperature.

**NOTE:** IF TEMPERATURE IS UNUSUALLY HIGH OR LOW, CHECK WITH ANOTHER THERMOMETER.

#### AXILLARY TEMPERATURE:

1. Use oral thermometer.
2. Place shield on thermometer.
3. Dry area under arm; place ball end of thermometer in the hollow of the armpit.
4. Position arm over chest, with hand resting on opposite shoulder.
5. Allow thermometer to remain in place for ten minutes.
6. Remove thermometer.

**NOTE:** IF CHANGE OF TEMPERATURE IS UNUSUAL, CHECK WITH ANOTHER THERMOMETER.

#### RECTAL TEMPERATURE:

**NOTE: DO NOT TAKE TEMPERATURE ON RESIDENTS WITH DIARRHEA, HEMORRHOIDS OR RECTAL BLEEDING.**

1. Use rectal thermometer.
2. Position resident on side and drape for privacy.
3. Lubricate thermometer and insert bulb into rectum. Hold thermometer in place for three minutes.
4. Remove thermometer, wipe with tissue and take reading.  
**NOTE: IF CHANGE IN TEMPERATURE IS UNUSUAL, CHECK WITH ANOTHER THERMOMETER.**
5. Cleanse and dry rectal area and position resident comfortably.

#### PULSE MEASUREMENT:

1. Radial pulse:
  - A. Position resident's arm at the level of the heart with palm down.
  - B. Palpate the radial artery.
  - C. Count pulse rate for 60 seconds; note rhythm.
2. Apical pulse:
  - A. Drape resident to expose left side of chest.
  - B. Place stethoscope over the apex of the heart – this should be below the left breast.
  - C. Count the apical pulse for 60 seconds; note rhythm.

#### RESPIRATIONS:

1. Place stethoscope on resident's chest.
2. Count respirations for 60 seconds. Listen for breath sounds, note rhythm and volume of respirations.
3. One respiration includes one inspiration and one expiration.