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Normal adult vital signs and abnormal findings

Core Nursing Essentials Core Clinical Concepts

Resting adult observations are interpreted together with symptoms and previous readings. Measure temperature, pulse, breathing, blood pressure and oxygen saturation using an appropriate device and site.

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Introduction & key concepts

Resting adult observations are interpreted together with symptoms and previous readings. Measure temperature, pulse, breathing, blood pressure and oxygen saturation using an appropriate device and site.

Typical resting adult examples

These examples describe an average resting adult. Age, fitness, measurement site, medicines and illness affect interpretation. A reference value is not a stand-alone diagnostic or emergency threshold.

Observation	Typical example
Pulse	60-100 beats/minute
Respiration	12-18 breaths/minute (source example)
Temperature	36.5-37.3 C (source example)

Use the institution's chart, correct technique and a trend from baseline; this table does not supply paediatric or newborn reference values.

Nursing responsibilities

- Check identity, consent, the relevant observations and the purpose of the assessment.
- Record the finding, context and response using the approved clinical record.
- Escalate uncertainty or deterioration to the responsible professional; do not use a study note as a standing treatment order.

Clinical example & examination focus

In a viva, explain normal adult vital signs and abnormal findings in your own words, identify the observations needed and state a limitation. Compare the finding with the patient's baseline rather than assuming one number or label gives a diagnosis.

Quick Revision

Resting adult observations are interpreted together with symptoms and previous readings. Measure temperature, pulse, breathing, blood pressure and oxygen saturation using an appropriate device and site.

Frequently asked question

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Can this summary replace practical training?

No. Use your prescribed learning material and the institution's current protocol with qualified supervision.

References & review status

- MedlinePlus - Vital signs (https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/002341.htm) - Medical encyclopedia accessed 26 November 2026. Selected typical resting adult values, not universal diagnostic or escalation limits.

Sources checked for the stated scope on 26 November 2026. Original study synthesis; independent clinical review is not claimed. Source attribution is not a copyright-clearance certificate.

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Original concise teaching synthesis. MedlinePlus - Vital signs (https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/002341.htm)

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