

# Vital Sign Notes

## **Heart Rate**

We want to determine the heart rate, rhythm, and quality.

- Rate = number of beats in 30 sec X 2
- Rhythm = regular, irregular
- Quality = strong, weak

Verbal Report Example: “The heart rate is eighty beats per minute, regular, and strong.”

Written Report Example: HR = 82/min, reg, strong

## **Blood Pressure**

We want to determine a systolic and diastolic pressure by auscultation.

- Alternatively, we can determine a blood pressure by palpation, which gives us the systolic pressure only!

Blood pressure by auscultation:

- Systolic pressure = The pressure at which you first hear the pulse as you are releasing pressure from the BP cuff.
- Diastolic pressure = The pressure at which the pulse goes away.

Blood pressure by palpation:

- Systolic pressure = The pressure at which you first feel a pulse.

Verbal Report Example: “The patient's blood pressure is 124/76 mmHg.”

Verbal Report Example: “The patient's blood pressure is 120 mmHg by palpation.”

Written Report Example: BP = 134/82mmHg

## **Respiratory Rate**

We want to determine our patient's respiratory rate (RR), tidal volume (TV), and effort.

- Respiratory Rate = number of breaths in 30 sec X 2.
- TV = shallow, normal, deep
- Effort = labored or unlabored

Verbal Report Example: “The respiratory rate is six per minute, shallow, and labored.”

Written Report Example: RR = 12/min, GTV, unlabored (GTV = good tidal volume)

## **Pulse Oximetry**

We want to determine the patient's oxygen saturation. Normal is typically around 96-98% or so. It is uncommon for a human breathing atmospheric air to have a oxygen saturation of 100%. The AHA considers anything below 94% to be of concern, so you should, too!

Verbal Report Example: “The patient's oxygen saturation is 98% on room air, and 100% on oxygen at 2 lpm via nasal cannula.”

Written Report Example: SpO<sub>2</sub> = 98% RA.

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## Additional Clinical Exam Findings Often “Lumped In” with Vital Signs:

### Capillary Refill

Measured in seconds, normal is about 2 seconds or less in males, children, and infants, 3 seconds in females, and up to 4 seconds in the elderly..

Verbal Report Example: “The patient's capillary refill is two seconds.”

Written Report Example: Cap Refill = 2 sec

### Skin Signs

We want to determine the color, temperature, and condition of our patient's skin.

- Color = pink, pale, cyanotic, flushed
- Temperature = hot, warm, cool, cold
- Condition = moist, dry, clammy (cold & moist)

Verbal Report Example: “The patient's skin is cool, pale, and diaphoretic.”

Written Report Example: skin = P/W/D (pink, warm, and dry)

### Pupils

We want to determine if our patient's pupils are equal and if they are reactive to light.

- PERRL = Pupils Equal, Round, and Reactive to Light
- Can describe reaction as sluggish if slow.
- Fixed pupil = does not respond to light.
- Dilated pupil = is larger than expected.
- Constricted pupil = is small then expected.

Verbal Report Example: “The patient's pupils are equal, round, and reactive to light bilaterally.”

Written Report Example: PERRL ⊥