

Policy: Vital Signs

Purpose: to provide guidance for the staff nurse to determine the most appropriate actions to take for vital signs that are not within the normal age range and have not otherwise been addressed by the physician.

Policy:

All vital signs will be checked as per the physician directed plan of care.

Orders will include routine frequency and if ordered “prn” will include the reason / rationale.

All abnormal vital signs taken by a HHA (or C.N.A.) will be reported to the Integrity RN case manager, at the time of occurrence.

Vital Signs as taken by the LPN or RN:

Blood pressures, heart rates and/ or respiratory rates that are not within the stated normal range, unless otherwise indicated and ordered by the physician with accompanying symptoms of distress will be repeated at intervals of 10 to 15 minutes until they have either responded to nursing interventions or have been transferred to an emergency attendant (rescue / 911).

Blood pressures, heart rates and/ or respiratory rates that are not within the stated normal range, unless otherwise indicated and ordered by the physician with no other symptoms of distress will be repeated in 30 minutes and if they remain abnormal the physician at that time and when stabilized reported to the Integrity RN on call .

Normal body temperature varies by person, age, activity, and time of day. The average normal body temperature is generally accepted as 98.6°F (37°C). Studies have shown that the "normal" body temperature can have a wide range, from 97°F (36.1°C) to 99°F (37.2°C). A temperature over 100.4°F (38°C) most often means that the patient has a **fever** caused by an infection or illness. Body temperature normally changes throughout the day. A person's body temperature can be taken in any of the following ways:

- Orally. Temperature can be taken by mouth using either the classic glass thermometer, or the more modern digital thermometers that use an electronic probe to measure body temperature.
- Rectally. Temperatures taken rectally (using a glass or digital thermometer) tend to be 0.5 to 0.7 degrees F higher than when taken by mouth.

- Axillary. Temperatures can be taken under the arm using a glass or digital thermometer. Temperatures taken by this route tend to be 0.3 to 0.4 degrees F lower than those temperatures taken by mouth.
- By ear. A special thermometer can quickly measure the temperature of the ear drum, which reflects the body's core temperature (the temperature of the internal organs).
- By skin. A special thermometer can quickly measure the temperature

New onset of an elevated temperature or any existing elevated temperature, that is not responding to physician ordered interventions such as antipyretics and / or antibiotics that are accompanied with signs and symptoms of distress will be reported to the physician and nursing interventions provided while child either stabilizes or care is transitioned to the emergent care provider or rescue.

New onset of an elevated temperature or any existing elevated temperature that is responding to physician ordered interventions such as antipyretics and / or antibiotics and there are no signs or symptoms of distress will be reported to the on call RN Case manager at the time of occurrence and condition discussed. The RN case manager will notify the physician during the following office day at the latest.

All pulse oximetry orders are based upon individual diagnosis and interventions and will be all inclusive on the physician orders.

Normal Heart Rate by Age (Beats/Minute)		
Age	Awake Rate	Sleeping Rate
Neonate (<28 d)	100-205	90-160
Infant (1 mo-1 y)	100-190	90-160
Toddler (1-2 y)	98-140	80-120
Preschool (3-5 y)	80-120	65-100

Normal Heart Rate by Age (Beats/Minute)

Age	Awake Rate	Sleeping Rate
School-age (6-11 y)	75-118	58-90
Adolescent (12-15 y)	60-100	50-90
16y to Adult	60-100	60-100

Normal Respiratory Rate by Age (Breaths/Minute)

Age	Normal Respiratory Rate
Infants (<1 y)	30-53
Toddler (1-2 y)	22-37
Preschool (3-5 y)	20-28
School-age (6-11 y)	18-25
Adolescent (12-15 y)	12-20
16y to Adult	12-20

Normal Blood Pressure by Age

Age	Systolic Blood Pressure	Diastolic Blood Pressure
Birth (12 h)	60-76	31-45

Normal Blood Pressure by Age

Age	Systolic Blood Pressure	Diastolic Blood Pressure
Neonate (96 h)	67-84	35-53
Infant (1-12 mo)	72-104	37-56
Toddler (1-2 y)	86-106	42-63
Preschooler (3-5 y)	89-112	46-72
School-age (6-9 y)	97-115	57-76
Preadolescent (10-11 y)	102-120	61-80
Adolescent (12-15 y)	110-131	64-83
16 y to Adult	110-139	60-89

References

American Heart Association-

Tables and data have been adapted from the Pediatric Advanced Life Support Manual. American Heart Association, 2012.

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Sullivan JE, Farrar HC, Section on Clinical Pharmacology and Therapeutics, Committee on Drugs. Fever and antipyretic use in children. Pediatrics. 2011;127:580-587