

INCLUDES
THE ABC'S OF
FEELING THE
PULSE



KNOW YOUR PULSE
PREVENT STROKE

Know your pulse – prevent stroke

Do you know if your heart beats as it should?

Is your heartbeat regular or irregular?

An irregular pulse may result from atrial fibrillation (AF) which is the most common disturbance of heart rhythm.

Its most serious consequence is stroke.

Atrial fibrillation is common in people over 60 years of age

Atrial fibrillation is a common rhythm disturbance in older people. It impairs well-being and threatens health.

The ailment is rare in people under 60 years of age but becomes clearly more common in people over 60.

Atrial fibrillation can cause a stroke

In atrial fibrillation, heart atria do not contract effectively but quiver, in a manner of speaking.

When blood does not flow through your heart as it should, blood clots can form.

Blood clots can travel from the heart toward the brain, where they can cause blood vessel occlusion and a serious stroke.

Early detection of atrial fibrillation

Symptoms of atrial fibrillation include fatigue, palpitation, nausea and exhaustion.


Early recognition and treatment of the symptoms improve well-being and prevent strokes.

Two out of three strokes related to atrial fibrillation can be prevented by means of medication.

Atrial fibrillation can occur irregularly and periodically, in which case it may not be noticed at the visit to a doctor or nurse.

Atrial fibrillation can also be completely symptom-free but hazardous to the brain nevertheless.

The best way to detect atrial fibrillation is to measure your own pulse regularly.

A decorative graphic in the bottom right corner of the page. It features a bright pink, stylized hand or arm reaching upwards and to the left. Within the pink shape, there are two white, elongated oval shapes that resemble pulse monitor sensors or electrodes, positioned diagonally.

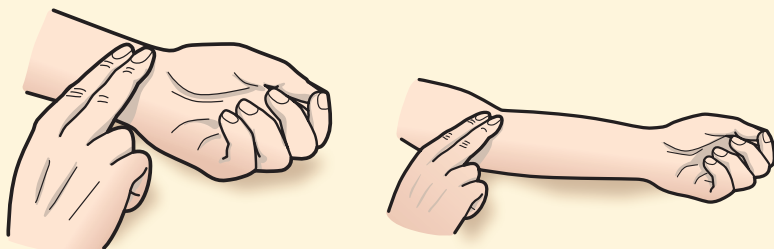
The ABCs of feeling your pulse

You can detect atrial fibrillation by feeling your pulse.

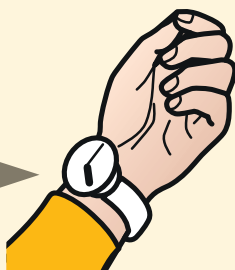
Everyone over 60 years of age should feel his or her pulse daily.

A) How to feel your pulse

- Stay still in place.
Test to see where you feel your pulse best.
Often it is easiest to feel the pulse when pressing on the wrist below the thumb with two fingers. Other places include the bend of the elbow or the neck.
- Observe first,
whether the beats occur regularly or irregularly. You will notice any change in the rhythm better if you count the beats aloud or say “yep” at every beat.
- Next, measure the pulse rate.
Count the beats during a half minute.
Multiply the result by two.
This is how you find out how many times your heart beats per minute.
The normal resting pulse is approximately 50–110 beats per minute.



Press lightly on the area being felt with one or two fingers so that you feel the pulse.



Count the beats during a half minute.
Multiply the result by two.

B) Make feeling your pulse a habit

- Feel your pulse when you wake up in the morning and when you go to bed at night.
- Measure your pulse in the morning and in the evening, even if has been regular for a long time.
- Even if the pulse is regular at the time of measurement, it does not eliminate the risk of a rhythm disturbance in the future.



MORNING



EVENING





C) Contact your nurse or doctor when necessary

Contact your doctor or nurse when:

- A previously regular pulse is repeatedly irregular.
- Your pulse rate is so rapid or irregular that you cannot measure it.
- Your resting pulse rate is clearly faster than before.
Reasons for a faster pulse rate include, for example, the common cold, exercise or medicines.
- Your pulse rate has slowed to less than 50 beats per minute without a reason.
- If an irregular, slow or rapid pulse causes sudden nausea, go to the emergency clinic at once or call the emergency number 112.
- Contact the doctor whenever the resting pulse rate is over 110 beats per minute.



112

If an irregular, slow or rapid pulse
causes sudden nausea,
go the emergency clinic at once
or call the emergency number 112.



Even if the doctor does not discover any pulse abnormality, your observation of an irregular pulse rate may be correct, however.

The rhythm disturbance may have passed before you could have a medical examination. It's good that the doctor records your observations.

Good to know about your pulse

- The resting pulse rate is normally 50–110 beats per minute, but small deviations are not hazardous.
- The pulse rate becomes faster as a result of exercise, stress, pain, becoming nervous, drinking coffee, staying awake at night, smoking and eating, for example.
- The heart can beat irregularly from time to time (“it skips a beat”, “the heart slips out of place”). This is usually caused by extra beats of the heart and they are not hazardous.
- If the pulse rate is rapid, an irregular pulse may be difficult to detect.

Pulse rate monitoring table

After measuring your pulse,
record the pulse rate in the table.
Keep recording until you become familiar with your pulse.
Make feeling your pulse a habit.

Date		Beats/min	Regular	Irregular
	MORNING			
	EVENING			
	MORNING			
	EVENING			
	MORNING			
	EVENING			
	MORNING			
	EVENING			
	MORNING			
	EVENING			



Further information
can be found in Finnish at: **www.tunnepulssisi.fi**

