



25 YEARS
of health
information

Home → Health Topics → Vital Signs

URL of this page: <https://medlineplus.gov/vitalsigns.html>

Vital Signs

Your vital signs show how well your body is functioning. They are usually measured at doctor's offices, often as part of a health checkup [<https://medlineplus.gov/healthcheckup.html>] , or during an emergency room [<https://medlineplus.gov/emergencymedicalservices.html>] visit. They include:

- **Blood pressure**, which measures the force of your blood pushing against the walls of your arteries. Blood pressure that is too high [<https://medlineplus.gov/highbloodpressure.html>] or too low [<https://medlineplus.gov/lowlbloodpressure.html>] can cause problems. Your blood pressure has two numbers. The first number is the pressure when your heart beats and is pumping the blood. The second is from when your heart is at rest, between beats. A normal blood pressure reading for adults is lower than 120/80 and higher than 90/60.
- **Heart rate**, or pulse, which measures how fast your heart is beating. A problem with your heart rate may be an arrhythmia [<https://medlineplus.gov/arrhythmia.html>] . Your normal heart rate depends on factors such as your age, how much you exercise, whether you are sitting or standing, which medicines you take, and your weight.
- **Respiratory rate**, which measures your breathing. Mild breathing changes can be from causes such as a stuffy nose or hard exercise. But slow or fast breathing can also be a sign of a serious breathing problem [<https://medlineplus.gov/breathingproblems.html>] .
- **Temperature**, which measures how hot your body is. A body temperature that is higher than normal (over 98.6 °F, or 37 °C) is called a fever [<https://medlineplus.gov/fever.html>] .

Learn More

- Aging changes in vital signs [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/004019.htm>] (Medical Encyclopedia)
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/article/004019.htm>]
- All about Heart Rate [<https://www.heart.org/en/health-topics/high-blood-pressure/the-facts-about-high-blood-pressure/all-about-heart-rate-pulse>] (American Heart Association)
- Blood pressure [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/anatomyvideos/000013.htm>]  (Medical Encyclopedia)
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/anatomyvideos/000013.htm>]
- Blood Pressure: Does It Have a Daily Pattern? [<https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/high-blood-pressure/expert-answers/blood-pressure/FAQ-20058115?p=1>] (Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research)
Also in Spanish [<https://www.mayoclinic.org/es/diseases-conditions/high-blood-pressure/expert-answers/blood-pressure/faq-20058115?p=1>]
- Blood Pressure: Is It Affected by Cold Weather? [<https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/high-blood-pressure/expert-answers/blood-pressure/FAQ-20058250?p=1>] (Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research)
Also in Spanish [<https://www.mayoclinic.org/es/diseases-conditions/high-blood-pressure/expert-answers/blood-pressure/faq-20058250?p=1>]
- Body temperature norms [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/001982.htm>] (Medical Encyclopedia)
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/article/001982.htm>]
- Breathing [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/anatomyvideos/000018.htm>]  (Medical Encyclopedia)
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/anatomyvideos/000018.htm>]
- How Your Body Controls Breathing [<https://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/lungs/body-controls-breathing>]
 (National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute)
Also in Spanish [<https://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/es/salud/pulmones/controles-respiratorios-del-cuerpo>]
- Measuring Blood Pressure [<https://medlineplus.gov/lab-tests/measuring-blood-pressure/>]  (National Library of Medicine)

Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/pruebas-de-laboratorio/medicion-de-la-presion-arterial/>]

- Pulse [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/003399.htm>] (Medical Encyclopedia)
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/article/003399.htm>]
- Temperature measurement [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/003400.htm>] (Medical Encyclopedia)
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/article/003400.htm>]
- Thermometers: Understand the Options [<https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/fever/in-depth/thermometers/ART-20046737?p=1>] (Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research)
Also in Spanish [<https://www.mayoclinic.org/es/diseases-conditions/fever/in-depth/thermometers/art-20046737?p=1>]
- Wrist Blood Pressure Monitors: Are They Accurate? [<https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/high-blood-pressure/expert-answers/wrist-blood-pressure-monitors/FAQ-20057802?p=1>]
(Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research)
Also in Spanish [<https://www.mayoclinic.org/es/diseases-conditions/high-blood-pressure/expert-answers/wrist-blood-pressure-monitors/faq-20057802?p=1>]

Clinical Trials

- ClinicalTrials.gov: Vital Signs [<https://clinicaltrials.gov/search?cond=%22Vital+Signs%22&aggFilters=status:not%20rec>]
 (National Institutes of Health)

Journal Articles

References and abstracts from MEDLINE/PubMed (National Library of Medicine)

- Article: Is age associated with different vital signs in adults presenting to...
[<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/40698886>]
- Article: Intensive vital signs monitoring reduces 30-day mortality among stroke patients: A...
[<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/40690462>]
- Article: Key Vital Signs Monitor Based on MIMO Radar. [<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/40648335>]
- Vital Signs -- see more articles [<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/?term=%22Vital+Signs%22%5Bmajr%3Aexp%5D+AND+humans%5Bmh%5D+AND+english%5Bla%5D+AND+%22last+1+Year%22+%5Bdat%5D+NOT+%28letter%5Bpt%5D+OR+case+reports%5Bpt%5D+OR+editorial%5Bpt%5D+OR+comment%5Bpt%5D%29+AND+free+full+text%5Bsb%5D+>]



MedlinePlus links to health information from the National Institutes of Health and other federal government agencies.

MedlinePlus also links to health information from non-government Web sites. See our [disclaimer](#)

[<https://medlineplus.gov/disclaimers.html>] about external links and our [quality guidelines](#)

[<https://medlineplus.gov/criteria.html>].

The information on this site should not be used as a substitute for professional medical care or advice. Contact a health care provider if you have questions about your health.

[Learn how to cite this page](#)

National Library of Medicine 8600 Rockville Pike, Bethesda, MD 20894 U.S. Department of Health and Human Services National Institutes of Health

Last updated April 18, 2023