

How do I check my breathing rate?

Count the breaths

Breathing is measured in breaths per minute or bpm. To get an accurate measurement, the person must be at rest. This means she is not breathing faster than usual due to exercising.

Have clock face with the second hand in front of you to time your breathing rate, or use a stop watch instead.

Adult:

- Have the person sit up straight
- Use a stop watch to time one minute. Count the number of times the person's chest rises and falls during that minute. If this is difficult to gauge, you can rest your hand on your chest and feel the number of times the chest rises and falls.
- If you tell the person that you are going to measure her breathing, she is likely to change her breathing rate without realizing it. Tell her to breathe normally. To improve the accuracy of your result, you can take the measurement three times and average the answers.
- If you are pressed for time, count the breaths in a 30 second window, then multiply the number of breaths by 2. This gives a close approximation of breaths per minute and is useful in emergency situations.

Child:

- If you are measuring an infant, lay the baby flat on her back on a firm surface.
- Use a stop watch to time one minute. Count the number of times the person's chest rises and falls during that minute.