

## Vital Signs Assignment

- Temporal: This site is on easily accessible pulse on children but is also used during in-depth cranial examinations.
- Carotid: A nurse or healthcare professional that is CPR certified may access this pulse in emergency situations. When finding an individual unconscious, one of the first steps is to check for a pulse at the carotid artery.
- Apical: This site is used to assess cardiac function or status, the location of this is at the cross-section of the fifth intercostal space and the left midclavicular line, also known as the Point of Maximum Impulse (PMI). This location is roughly where an individual's apex of the heart is located, a nurse may use this when patients have a history of heart problems or on cardiovascular medications.
- Brachial: Similarly to the carotid pulse, in emergency situations, the brachial artery is accessed when a nurse or healthcare professional that is CPR certified finds an infant unconscious. One of the first steps is to see if the infant has a pulse at the brachial artery. This is also used when measuring a patient's blood pressure by palpating the brachial artery or placing a stethoscope on the brachial artery.
- Radial: One of the easiest peripheral sites to access meaning nurses may use this site when performing an assessment to quickly attain a pulse.
- Ulnar: Nurses may perform an Allen Test by using the ulnar artery, this test is performed to determine if there is dual blood supply to the hand. In instances where the radial artery is occluded, health care professionals must assess if the hand can get adequate blood supply from elsewhere, in this case the ulnar artery.
- Femoral: This site is accessed when other peripheral arteries are unavailable and is used as another way to assess blood circulation status to the leg. The femoral artery could also be accessed when performing a physical examination.
- Popliteal: Located in the popliteal fossa, nursing may use this pulse as an alternative when measuring blood pressure similarly to the posterior tibial pulse. Another way of accessing the status of blood flow circulation to the leg is by palpating the popliteal pulse.
- Posterior tibial and Dorsalis pedis: A nurse would palpate the posterior tibial and dorsalis pedis sites to determine the status of blood circulation to the foot. The posterior tibial site can also be an alternate form to measure blood pressure if a patient has a congenital heart

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defect causing them to have a high blood pressure reading in their upper extremities.