

## Accessible arterial pulse sites performance aid

**Carotid artery pulse** - The common carotid artery is palpated on the neck below the jaw and lateral to the larynx/trachea (i.e., mid-point between your earlobe and chin) using the middle and index fingers.

**Radial artery pulse** - The radial pulse is palpated immediately above the wrist joint near the base of the thumb (i.e., common site), or in the anatomical snuff box (i.e., alternative site), by gently pressing the radial artery against the underlying bone with the middle and index fingers.

**Brachial artery pulse** - The brachial artery is palpated on the anterior aspect of the elbow by gently pressing the artery against the underlying bone with the middle and index fingers. The brachial artery pulse is commonly used to measure blood pressure with a stethoscope and sphygmomanometer.

**Femoral pulse** - The femoral pulse is palpated over the ventral thigh between the pubic symphysis and anterior superior iliac spine with the middle and index fingers.

**Popliteal pulse** - The popliteal pulse is palpated on the posterior knee with the middle and index fingers; this pulse is more difficult to palpate as compared to other pulse sites.

**Posterior tibial pulse** - The posterior tibial pulse is palpated posterior and inferior to the medial malleolus by gently pressing the tibial artery against the underlying bone with the middle and index fingers.

**Dorsalis pedis pulse** - The dorsalis pedis pulse is palpated in the groove between the first and second toes slightly medial on the dorsum of the foot (i.e., dorsal-lateral to the extensor hallucis longus tendon and distal to the dorsal prominence of the navicular bone) with the middle and/or index fingers.

**Temporal pulse** - The temporal pulse (i.e., superficial temporal artery) is palpated on the temple directly in front of the ear with the index finger.

**Apical pulse** - The unilateral apical pulse (i.e., apex of the heart) can be located in the fifth intercostal space immediately to the left of the sternum using a stethoscope. In contrast to other pulses, the apical pulse is measured over the heart and not an artery, and is commonly heard with a stethoscope as opposed to palpated.

