

What do **VITAL SIGNS** reveal?

When we go to the doctor, we expect several things to happen when we are walked back to an exam room. We know a nurse, or medical assistant takes our temperature and blood pressure and listens to our heart.

We ask about the numbers, and more often than not have an idea if they fall within acceptable ranges.

But do we know why measuring vital signs are always part of any examination?

Are they performed just to keep us busy, or are there valid medical reasons behind them?

There are significant reasons a doctor needs to know our vital signs before performing additional aspects of a physical examination.

4 primary vital signs

Vital signs measure functions of the body that are essential for good health. There are four vital signs nearly all physicians measure before beginning any physical examination. They are:



Body Temperature

Body temperature is the amount of heat contained in the body.



Pulse Rate

When you measure the number of times your heart beats per minute, you measure your pulse rate.



Respiration Rate

Your respiration rate is the number of breaths you take in a minute.



Blood Pressure

High blood pressure is when your blood pressure, the force of the blood flowing through your blood vessels, is consistently too high.



Want to learn more?

The time it takes to measure your vital signs is short, and the methods are relatively easy when compared to other tests. If you are interested in learning how you can take your vital sign measurements at home, [The American Heart Association](#) can tell you how on their website.

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