

Physiological Monitoring in Stroke

Heart Rate

Normal Heart Rate is between 50 and 80 beats per minute.

Monitoring Heart Rate

Heart rate may be measured by:

- 1. Radial or Brachial Pulse**
- 2. Pulse Oximetry Devices**
- 3. Cardiac Auscultation**
- 4. ECG Monitoring**

Methods 1) and 2) may be inaccurate when a patient has low blood pressure, poor cardiac output or is in Atrial Fibrillation

Carotid palpation should be avoided in patients following stroke.

Common causes of tachycardia in stroke patients include

- Arrhythmia e.g. Atrial Fibrillation.**
- Pain.**
- Stress or Anxiety.**
- Rising Temperature.**
- Impending hypotension.**
- Internal Bleeding.**
- Heart failure**

Assess pulse manually to determine if regular.

Heart rate should be checked 2-4 hourly in the first 24 hours post stroke

- 4 hourly in the first week.**
- 6-12 hourly thereafter.**

If a significant tachycardia or arrhythmia is present consideration should be given to continuous monitoring.

Managing new onset tachycardia in acute stroke.

