



## MODULE 7:

### ACTIVITY 2C: HOW TO COUNT RESPIRATIONS

1. You will need a clock with a second hand to count respirations. Your respiratory rate will not be correct if you count your own because you are aware of your own breathing, so you will need someone else to count for you.
2. You should be sitting (or lying) down. Respirations should be counted for one full minute (60 seconds). If the breathing is regular, respirations can also be counted for 30 seconds and the number multiplied by two. This will give a person's respiratory rate for one minute.
3. Respirations can be counted by placing your hand on the upper chest to feel it rise and fall. If you can hear the person breathing, count how many times s/he breathes in one minute. Listen to hear if the person is breathing deep (slow) or shallow (fast). Also, write down anything you notice about the person's breathing, such as it being regular or irregular and if there are any sounds.
4. Write down the respiratory rate as soon as you finish.

#### EXPLANATION:

Most people take 10 to 20 breaths every minute. You probably breathe faster during exercise or when excited. If you have pain or a fever, you may breathe faster. You breathe slower when you are asleep and when you are calm and relaxed.

If clients ask why they need their respirations counted, you can say, "You may need to have your respirations counted because of an illness, such as lung disease." Or, "Some medicines may change how fast or slow you breathe." Write down the respiratory rate *each and every time* it is taken.