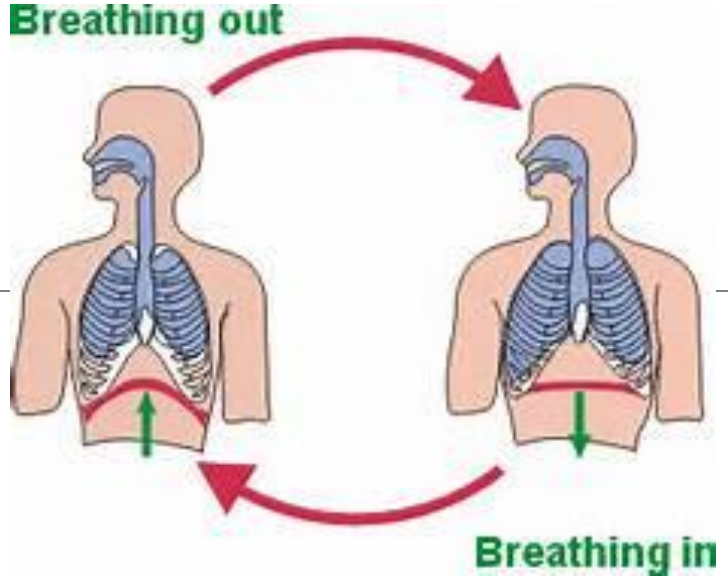
Vital Signs: Respirations

HS2

Objectives

Measure and record respirations to an accuracy of +/- 2 of instructor’s count

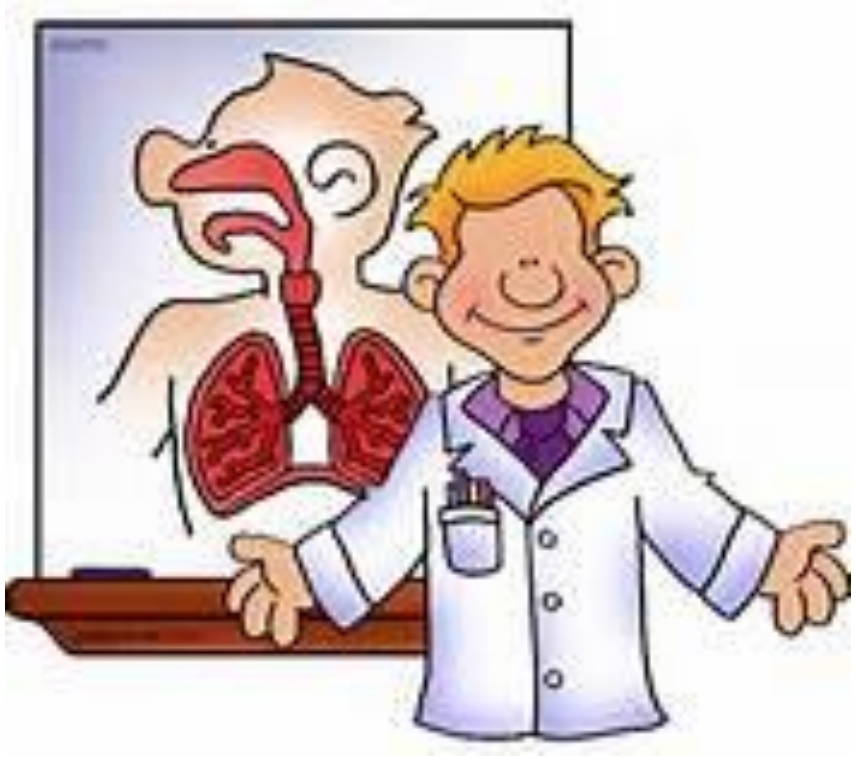
Respirations



- One respiration consists of one inspiration and one expiration
- Abbreviated=R or RR
- Can be counted by observing chest movement or auscultating
- Assess rate, character, and rhythm of respirations

Respiratory Rate

- Number of breaths per minute
- Adult normal=12 – 20 breaths per minute
- RR decreases as a person increases in size and age



Respiratory Character &Rhythm

- Character=depth and quality of respirations
- Deep, shallow, labored, difficult, moist
- Rhythm=regularity of respirations or equal spacing between breaths
- Regular or irregular

Respirations

- Pt should not be aware you are counting their RR
- Count RR for 1 full minute
- Record the rate, character, and rhythm

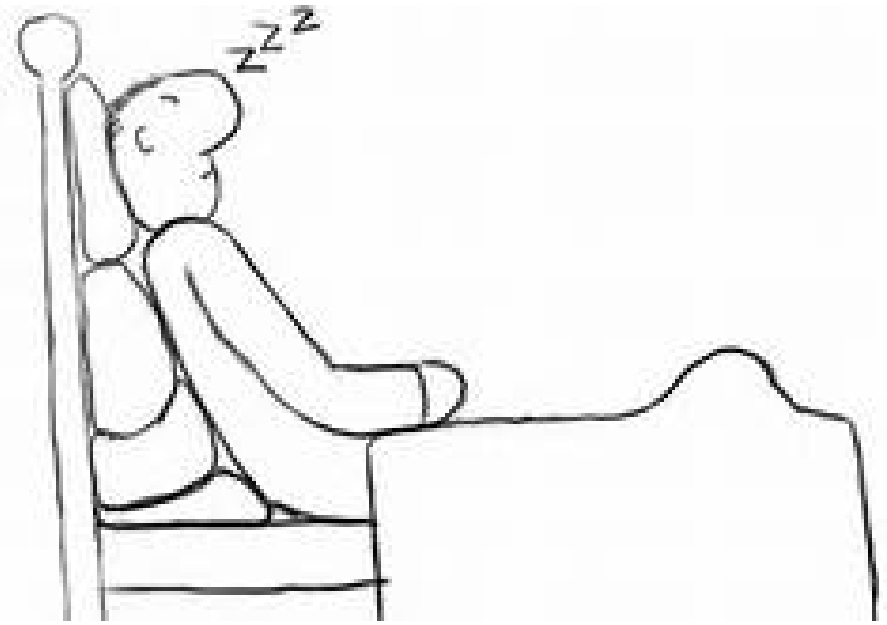
  example:

  R 16 deep and regular

  R 12 shallow and irregular

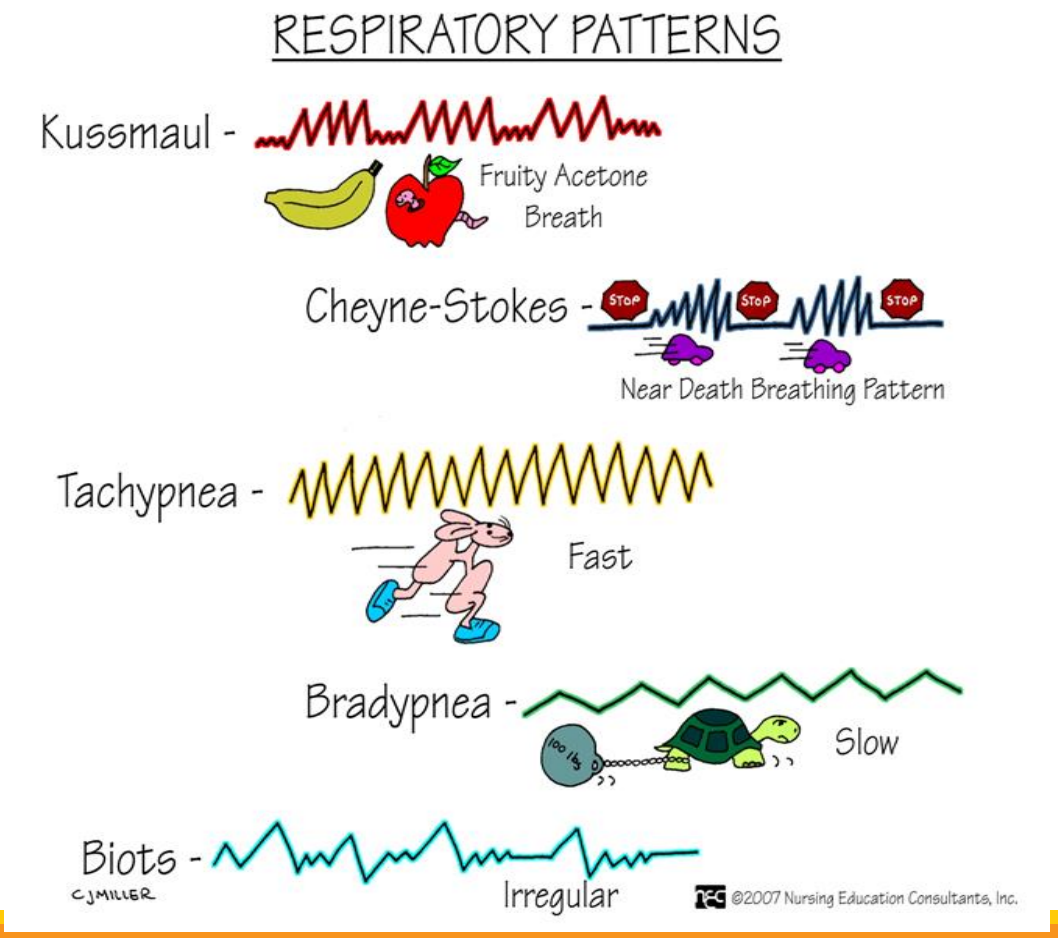
Abnormal Respirations

- **Dyspnea**=difficult or labored breathing
- **Apnea**=absence of respirations, usually a temporary period of no respirations
- **Orthopnea**=severe dyspnea in which breathing is very difficult in any position other than sitting erect or standing



Abnormal Respirations

- **Tachypnea**=rapid, shallow RR; >25 respirations per minute
- **Bradypnea**=slow RR; <10 respirations per minute
- **Cheyne-Stokes**=abnormal breathing pattern; period of dyspnea and apnea



Abnormal Respirations

- **Rales**=bubbling or noisy sounds caused by fluids or mucus
- **Wheezing**=high pitched whistling during expiration
- **Cyanosis**=bluish discoloration of skin, lips, and/or nail beds