See Your Pulse

Human Body | 10-15 minutes

In this activity, students will be able to see their heart! Or at least see how fast it's beating.

Materials Needed

Per student:

- 1 glob of playdough or clay
- 1 toothpick
- 1 pen and piece of paper to record results

A few per group:

- Stopwatches

Steps:

1. Make a small ball with a little bit of clay or playdough.
2. Insert a toothpick into the ball, making sure it is held securely.
3. Find your pulse on the inside of your wrist, just below your thumb.
4. Stick the ball to that spot on your wrist, with the toothpick sticking straight up away from your wrist. The ball should stay on your wrist without being held there.
5. Watch the toothpick move as blood pumps through your wrist. It is now a visual indicator of your pulse.
6. Using the stopwatch, count how many times the toothpick wiggles in 60 seconds. That is your pulse. Write that down as your "resting pulse."
7. Remove the ball and toothpick from your wrist.
8. Jog in place, do jumping jacks, or engage in some sort of high intensity exercise for two minutes.
9. Quickly put your ball and toothpick pulse indicator back onto your wrist and measure your pulse again for 60 seconds. Write that down as your "exercising pulse."

Explanation:

Every time your heart pumps, it sends blood through your body. The speed that it pumps is called your *pulse,* usually measured in beats per minute. When you exercise, your muscles need more food and oxygen from your blood so your heart has to work harder and pump faster.

Fun Fact:

Your heart pumps about 100,000 times per day!