

# Oximetry at Home and COVID-19 Virtual Ward

Community and Primary Care Services

The prevention of infection is a major priority in all healthcare and everyone has a part to play.

- Please decontaminate your hands frequently for 20 seconds using soap and water or alcohol gel if available
- If you have symptoms of diarrhoea and/or vomiting, cough or other respiratory symptoms, a temperature or any loss of taste or smell please do not visit the hospital or any other care facility and seek advice from 111
- Keep the environment clean and tidy
- Let's work together to keep infections out of our hospitals and care homes.



# Introduction

This leaflet will provide you with information on monitoring your oxygen levels at home using a pulse oximeter or advice on continuing your COVID-19 treatment in your home environment.

## About your illness

You have a viral illness (COVID-19 infection). For most people symptoms will be relatively mild however for some, symptoms can quickly become serious, such as signs that your breathing is getting worse.

Some other symptoms, such as fever, cough, muscle aches, tiredness, mild chest pain and change in taste or smell are less worrying and most people will get better by themselves within 2 to 3 weeks. Some people with COVID-19 infection may continue to have symptoms for longer than the recovery period.

You may have recently had a hospital stay because of COVID-19, and you have now been discharged to continue with your treatment plan at home. This may involve having nurses visiting you at home to support.

To find out more visit [www.patient.info/coronavirus-covid-19](http://www.patient.info/coronavirus-covid-19)

## Why are you being monitored?

You will be provided with a pulse oximeter to monitor your oxygen levels at home. The reason we are asking you to monitor your oxygen level is because this helps us to assess COVID-19 related symptoms and identify whether you need oxygen which may require hospital treatment.

If a nurse is visiting you, they will check your oxygen levels for you.

## How long will you be monitored for?

We will be monitoring you until your oxygen level has been stable for at least 48 hours, and this could possibly take up to 2 weeks.

## Will I need any other treatment?

If you have been discharged from hospital on oxygen therapy, this will need to continue as advised until your observations are stable and are back within your target range. The nurse visiting you at home will advise when this will be, and will support you to slowly reduce the amount of oxygen that you require at home. The nurse will not discharge you until you have stopped needing oxygen for your oxygen levels to be stable. You may also need other treatments such as steroids and anti-coagulation medication. If you need help in administering these treatments, the nurse can support you with this.

## What will happen when you are being monitored?

You will first be contacted by a Health Care Professional from the Oximetry at Home Service who will complete an assessment with you and record your baseline symptoms. The Health Care Professional will provide you with your patient diary and explain how to record your symptoms in your diary. It is important that you record your oxygen levels three times a day.

You will be contacted by the Oximetry at Home Service up to three times a day to report your readings from your diary. The readings you report will determine if someone will need to assess you at home or if any changes to your treatment is needed. We will aim to contact you between the times listed below.

**First Recording:** Between 08:00 and 09:00

**Second Recording:** Between 12:00 and 13:00

**Third Recording:** Between 16:00 and 17:00

## How to use your pulse oximeter?

A pulse oximeter is a simple device. It measures heart rate and level of oxygen in your blood quickly and painlessly.

- Remove nail polish and acrylic nails on the finger that you will be using for measuring as this can adversely affect the result
- Please wash your hands in warm water to ensure your fingers are clean and warm as cold fingers, poor circulation or low blood pressure will affect readings

- Please take the reading after you have been resting for at least 5 minutes
- Rest your hand on your chest at heart level and hold still
- Switch the pulse oximeter on and place it on your finger. It works best on your middle or index finger. It should not be used on your ear
- Please do not raise your arm or squeeze the probe as it can affect the readings
- Press the button to turn on
- Ensure there is an indicator on the oximeter confirming a regular waveform on the display
- The reading takes time to steady. Keep the oximeter in place for at least a minute, or longer if the reading keeps changing
- Record the highest result once the reading has not changed for at least 5 seconds.

Your first measurement is your baseline and will be taken by the Health Care Professional that first sees you. This should be recorded in your diary along with future readings at the times that you have been advised. Take extra measurements if you feel there has been a change in the way you feel.

## What else do I need to record?

Please also record the following information as well, as it helps us to understand how you are.

- **Temperature** – Please take your temperature using your own home thermometer if you have one
- **Breathing** – Count how many times you take a breath in a minute which is one count for breathing in and out
- **Feeling Worse / Same / Better** – This is your overall sense of how well or unwell you are feeling compared to yesterday. This could be that you feel weaker, more breathless, and lightheaded, or if you have developed new symptoms such as diarrhoea, vomiting, stopping urinating and chest pains.

As long as your oxygen level and breathing is normal you do not need to contact the Hospital, Service, GP or NHS. They will contact you at the agreed times to collect your readings.

## What do I do if I begin to feel worse?

**If your oxygen levels are 92% or less, contact the Care Co-ordination centre on 07917919837 or 07917919840 immediately. If you cannot get through at the first attempt, then dial 999.**

If you do begin to feel worse and wish to speak to a member of staff, please contact the Care Co-ordination centre on **07917919837** or **07917919840**. This number will be operational 24 hours per day so please use this number as your first point of contact. You will need to have your diary when you call as you will be asked questions on your readings.

## What happens when I am discharged?

When your oxygen levels have been stable for at least 48 hours and when our team decides that you no longer need to be monitored up to three times a day, we will call you to confirm this, outline any future care plan and we will also inform your registered GP of your results and consultations with us.

We know that patients who have had COVID-19 benefit from a period of rehabilitation and recovery. If necessary, we can refer you for ongoing support from the Intermediate Care Team or monitoring by the Respiratory Team in the community.

We will also arrange for return of the Pulse Oximeter at this time.

## What should I be doing because I have COVID-19?

You should self-isolate in line with national guidance (10 days from the onset of symptoms) regardless of whether you feel better. After this time, you can return to work and usual activities.

Throughout this period and beyond, you should wash your hands regularly with soap and hot water; wear a face covering when in public places and practice social distancing in line with government advice.

## Returning the Pulse Oximeter

- Please wash your hands with soap and water
- Clean the pulse oximeter with an antibacterial wipe
- Put it in a clean bag clearly marked with your name and address
- The Care Co-ordination team will advise where the device needs to be returned to once you have been discharged.

**If you have any questions, please contact:**

Community Care Co-ordination  
COVID-19 Virtual Ward Team  
07917919837 or 07917919840

## English

If you need information in another way like easy read or a different language please let us know.

If you need an interpreter or assistance please let us know.

## Lithuanian

Jeigu norėtumėte, kad informacija jums būtų pateikta kitu būdu, pavyzdžiui, supaprastinta forma ar kita kalba, prašome mums apie tai pranešti.

Jeigu jums reikia vertėjo ar kitos pagalbos, prašome mums apie tai pranešti.

## Polish

Jeżeli chcieliby Państwo otrzymać te informacje w innej postaci, na przykład w wersji łatwej do czytania lub w innym języku, prosimy powiedzieć nam o tym.

Prosimy poinformować nas również, jeżeli potrzebowałiby Państwo usługi tłumaczenia ustnego lub innej pomocy.

## Punjabi

ਜੇ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਇਹ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਰੂਪ ਵਿਚ, ਜਿਵੇਂ ਪੜ੍ਹਨ ਵਿਚ ਆਸਾਨ ਰੂਪ ਜਾਂ ਕਿਸੇ ਦੂਜੀ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਿਚ, ਚਾਹੀਦੀ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਦੱਸੋ।

ਜੇ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਦੁਭਾਸ਼ੀਏ ਦੀ ਜਾਂ ਸਹਾਇਤਾ ਦੀ ਲੋੜ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਦੱਸੋ।

## Romanian

Dacă aveți nevoie de informații în alt format, ca de exemplu caractere ușor de citit sau altă limbă, vă rugăm să ne informați.

Dacă aveți nevoie de un interpret sau de asistență, vă rugăm să ne informați.

## Traditional Chinese

如果您需要以其他方式了解信息，如易读或其他语种，请告诉我们。

如果您需要口译人员或帮助，请告诉我们。