

COVID Oximetry@home Patient Information Leaflet

Why have I been given this leaflet?

You have been assessed and have symptoms of the COVID-19 virus and referred to the COVID Oximetry@home (CO@h) team to enable us to monitor your condition closely until you are well again.

Please remain at home and follow the latest advice (via the NHS website – link below) for the next 10 days or until your symptoms have gone. Pay special attention to hand washing regularly and use of a face mask when around others, even in your home.

Please see the NHS website at <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/>

How does CO@h work and what do I need to do?

We have learnt that monitoring your blood oxygen level is the most accurate way of keeping an eye on your progress when you have symptoms of COVID-19. To do this you will be provided with a device called a pulse oximeter to take blood oxygen readings.

We will be monitoring your condition each day. You will be contacted to agree whether you prefer to submit your oxygen level readings to the CO@h team over the telephone or via a mobile phone app, for which instructions will be given.

You will need to monitor your symptoms until they have improved, and the CO@h team are happy that you are well enough to stop. Paracetamol and regular fluids can help with mild symptoms, and most people will get better by themselves within two to three weeks.

If you do start to feel more unwell, or your symptoms worsen please refer to the tables below to help you decide who to contact.

What is a pulse oximeter?

A pulse oximeter is a medical device that, using a probe attached painlessly to a clean finger, measures your blood oxygen levels. An ideal blood oxygen level is between 95% and 99%. An ideal heart rate is between 50 and 90 beats per minute (bpm).

We would expect your oxygen saturations to be at 95% or above when sitting. If it is below 95%, check it again in 5 mins. If it is still below 95%, please follow the emergency advice.

The oxygen saturation may be lower in some people with chronic lung and other conditions even when they are well. The doctor will give you guidance in this event.

How to use a pulse oximeter

You can access this YouTube video which shows how to use the oximeter or follow the instructions below.

English: www.youtube.com/watch?v=nx27Ck7xOgo

Polish: www.youtube.com/watch?v=Lkd-BNeMvLs

Hindi: www.youtube.com/watch?v=e1ipiJY-zwk

Punjabi: www.youtube.com/watch?v=wU5V6wVEHoM

Urdu: www.youtube.com/watch?v=rkG

Instructions for use

Cold hands, movement, dirt on the sensor and nail varnish can produce an inaccurate reading, so please follow these instructions:

1. Remove any nail polish or false nails and warm your hand if cold.
2. Make sure you have been resting for at least five minutes before taking your measurement.
3. Your hand should be resting on a flat surface such as a table or pillow at the level of your heart.
4. Switch the pulse oximeter on and place it on your finger. It works best on your middle or index finger (shown in the diagram). It should not be used on your ear.
5. Keep the pulse oximeter in place for at least a minute, or longer, until the result has not changed for five seconds.
6. Record the highest reading in your patient diary. Be careful to identify which reading is your heart rate and which is your oxygen level.
7. Remove the device. It will turn off automatically.

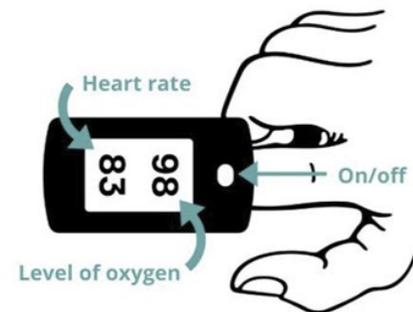


Image courtesy of Denis Barbulat

Recording the results from the pulse oximeter

The first time you use the pulse oximeter, you will have your baseline reading which you need to add into the highlighted area of the diary. Once you have recorded this you should take following readings at the same time each day – for example when you normally eat in the morning, at lunchtime and in the evening. You should also use the monitor if you feel there has been any change in how you are feeling and breathing. Please also take your temperature if you have access to a thermometer.

Record all readings in the diary.

You will need to monitor your symptoms until they have improved and the CO@h team are happy that you are well enough to stop.

What should I do if my symptoms get worse?

You should attend A&E as quickly as possible or call 999 immediately if you experience the following:

- Your blood oxygen levels are 92% or less
- You are unable to complete short sentences when at rest due to breathlessness
- Your breathing gets worse suddenly

OR If you develop these more general signs of serious illness, for example:

- You cough up blood
- Feel cold and sweaty with pale or blotchy skin
- Develop a rash that does not fade when you roll a glass over it
- Collapse or faint
- Become agitated, confused or very drowsy
- Stop passing urine or are passing much less than usual

You should tell the operator you might have coronavirus if you have not had a positive test result. A minority of people with COVID-19 will experience these more severe symptoms. These require urgent medical attention.

Ring your CO@h team on or NHS 111 as soon as possible if you experience any new or an increase in any the following COVID-19 symptoms:

- Feeling breathless or difficulty breathing, especially when standing up or moving
- Severe muscle aches or tiredness
- Shakes or shivers
- If you use a pulse oximeter and your blood oxygen levels is 94%, 93% or consistently lower than your usual reading and you feel unwell
- Sense that something is wrong (general weakness, severe tiredness, loss of appetite, peeing much less than normal, unable to care for yourself – simple tasks like washing and dressing or making food).

You should tell the operator you might have coronavirus if you have not had a positive test result.

Returning the pulse oximeter

We only have a limited number of pulse oximeters to loan out. If you no longer need it, it is essential that you return it in the bag provided so it can be safely cleaned and given to other patients.

Frequently asked questions

- **How long will I have access to the CO@h team?**

You will be able to contact the CO@h team until your symptoms improve – normally after 10-14 days.

- **What happens if I am discharged from the CO@h team and become worried about having symptoms of coronavirus?**

If you develop new symptoms after getting better, depending on the symptoms you are experiencing, you should follow the advice above and contact either your CO@h Team or NHS 111 or 999.

- **If a family or friend becomes unwell – can they call the CO@h team?**

Your family/friend should follow the advice above and contact either their GP or NHS 111 or 999 according to their symptoms.

- **How long can I keep the pulse oximeter monitor for?**

You will keep the oximeter for as long as you have access to the CO@h team – normally this is until your symptoms improve (after 10-14 days).

- **Can I use my own pulse oximeter?**

Yes, provided it has a CE kite mark. However, please do not use *smartphones* as oximeters because these have not yet been fully proven as an accurate monitor.

- **What should I do if I have any problems using my pulse oximeter?**

If the problem arises during the CO@h working hours, please call your team for advice.

If the monitor is not working outside of the team's working hours and you feel **unwell**, please contact 111 for advice.

If the monitor is not working and you feel **well**, please contact the CO@h team when they are open to organise a replacement monitor.

