



The Leeds  
Teaching Hospitals  
NHS Trust

# Measuring your blood oxygen levels at home

Information for pregnant patients



Leeds  
Maternity Care



## COVID Pulse Oximetry

You have been given a pulse oximeter and this leaflet will tell you how and when to use it. COVID-19 can cause low blood oxygen levels. Measuring your blood oxygen level is the most accurate way of monitoring this.

You have been given a pulse oximeter and a diary to record the results at home.

### What is a pulse oximeter?

A pulse oximeter measures the level of oxygen in your blood. It can also measure the speed your heart is beating (known as pulse rate).

An ideal blood oxygen level is between 95% and 100%

An ideal heart rate (pulse) is between 50 and 90 beats per minute (bpm).



### Before using the pulse oximeter

This pulse oximeter has been cleaned before it has been given to you. It is for your use only.

Keep it in the bag it came in.

Each time the pulse oximeter is used, you (and anyone who is helping you) should **wash your hands** in warm soapy water for at least 20 seconds.

- Once your hands are **dry**, remove the device from the bag.
- Please do not attempt to clean inside the pulse oximeter - this risks damaging it.

## How to use a pulse oximeter

It is important that you use your pulse oximeter as instructed to get an accurate reading. Please follow the instructions below for how to use your pulse oximeter correctly:

- Remove any nail polish or false nails (false nails or nail varnish can affect how the oximeter works).
- Make sure you are sat down for at least five minutes before taking your measurement.
- Warm your hand if it is cold.
- Turn the pulse oximeter on and place it on your finger. It should be placed on your middle or index finger.
- Rest your hand in the middle of your chest and hold still for at least one minute or longer if the reading keeps changing.
- Record the result once the reading has not changed for five seconds.
- Be careful to identify which reading is your heart rate and which is your oxygen level.



### Links to videos on how to use a pulse oximeter:

Here are some links to videos on how to use a pulse oximeter. If you have a paper copy of this leaflet you can type the web address into your internet browser.

- English <https://bit.ly/3qUxaTs>
- Polish (Polski) <https://bit.ly/3ISxRsw>
- Hindi <https://bit.ly/3ovb3B4>
- Punjabi <https://bit.ly/3mWj4hW>
- Urdu <https://bit.ly/33Rr0cS>

## Recording and acting on the results

Record your results in the COVID diary below.

Take measurements three times a day, at roughly the same time each day – for example when you normally eat in the morning, at lunchtime and in the evening.

Take extra measurements if you feel there has been a change in your symptoms or if you start to feel more unwell. Please record in the diary if you notice any changes in your symptoms or breathing. It is important you do not ignore if your breathing is becoming worse and seek help as outlined below.

### What the readings mean

<i>Blood oxygen level</i>	<i>What you should do</i>
95% and above	<b>Normal</b> - Continue monitoring and recording in the diary  If you feel unwell or feel your symptoms are getting worse do not delay contacting Maternity Assessment Centre even if your blood oxygen levels are normal.
Below 95%	<b>Abnormal</b> - Contact Maternity Assessment Centre without delay and tell them that you have tested positive for Covid and your blood oxygen levels are abnormal.

### **Ring 999 if:**

- You are **unable to complete short sentences when resting** due to breathlessness.
- Your **breathing suddenly worsens** within an hour.

### **OR if:**

- you are coughing up blood
- you have blue lips or a blue face
- you feel cold and sweaty **with** pale or blotchy skin
- you have a rash that does not fade when you roll a glass over it
- you collapse or faint
- you become agitated, confused or very drowsy
- you have stopped passing urine or are passing urine less than normal

**If you need to access 999 using a text relay, you can call 18000**

### **Ring Maternity Assessment Centre as soon as possible if:**

- You start feeling more unwell or more breathless.
- You are having difficulty breathing when moving or talking.
- You sense that something is wrong (general weakness, extreme tiredness, loss of appetite, reduced urine output, unable to care for yourself – simple tasks like washing and dressing or making food).
- You are concerned the pattern of your baby's movements had changed.
- You have any bleeding, pain or other pregnancy concerns.

## Returning the pulse oximeter

Once you have been told to stop using the pulse oximeter, please return your pulse oximeter to **your GP surgery** so that it so that it can be used for other patients. **Your practice will have advised you how to do this.** This will help the NHS learn how best to help other patients with COVID-19.

If you are shielding please ask a friend or volunteer to do this for you. You should return it in the bag/envelope provided so that it can be safely cleaned and given to other patients.

## Remote monitoring COVID-19 diary

First name: ..... Surname: .....

Date of birth: ..... Age: .....

NHS number (if known): .....

Live alone

Carer at home











## What did you think of your care?

Scan the QR code or visit [bit.ly/nhsleedsfft](https://bit.ly/nhsleedsfft)

*Your views matter*



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