

Pulse Oximetry- Patient Instructions for use

Pulse oximeters are medical devices that use red and infrared light to determine how much oxygen is circulating in your blood. The device is designed like a clip that covers the tip of your finger. Pulse oximeters measure your oxygen level and your heart rate. They must be positioned properly and used on fingers with good circulation.

How to use

1. Sit in a comfortable position.
2. Ensure that your hands are clean and relatively warm.
3. Remove any nail polish, artificial nails bandages or anything else covering your nails.
4. If your fingers are cold, warm your fingers by running them under good warm water or with a warm cloth, and by rubbing them – the oximeter needs good circulation to the finger to give an accurate reading.
5. Open the pulse oximeter like a clothes pin. Do not force it, it should open easily and just wide enough to allow your finger to fit inside.
6. Slide your forefinger or middle finger from either hand as far in as it will easily advance.
7. The pulse oximeter will turn on automatically when you insert your finger, the display may flash as it obtains the reading.
8. While waiting for the numbers to stabilize, check the battery indicator on the display. If the battery is low, contact _____ for advice.
9. Try to keep your hand relaxed and still while the pulse oximeter is measuring your oxygen level. There may be a small light or bar that illuminates every time your heart beats.
10. After about 1 minute record your oxygen level. The top number on the display is your oxygen level, the other number is your heart rate.
11. Remove the pulse oximeter from your finger. The device will turn off automatically and is ready to use again.

If the numbers are not displayed consistently:

- Make sure that your finger is all the way inside the oximeter
- Try another finger if still not reading
- Ensure the finger is warm, do not clench your fist, and keep your hand still.

Results

The maximum oxygen level is 100% and lower levels indicate that you have less oxygen circulating in your blood. If you have been prescribed home oxygen therapy, note beside the recording whether the measurement was done while using oxygen.

Your care team will advise you what pulse oximetry levels are acceptable for you. Generally, an oxygen level of 93% or greater is acceptable. **If your reading is less than 93% contact your care team.**

If your reading is lower by more than 3% from the previous day try a different finger to check the accuracy. If that reading is the same, contact your care team:

- Ensure that you are sitting and resting in a comfortable position. Loosen any tight clothing. Let someone in your home know that your oxygen level is lower.
- If you have been instructed to use your oxygen, to take any medications or to perform any breathing exercises, do that now.
- If you are very short of breath, feel dizzy, have chest pain or feel very unwell, call 911.

Cleaning

Do not get the oximeter wet. Wipe with a small **alcohol wipe**. Do not use other disinfecting/ antibacterial wipes as they may damage the digital display.