Pulse oximeter
Patient information

What is a pulse oximeter and why do I need to use it?

A pulse oximeter is a device that can monitor your breathing, your heart rate, and the amount of oxygen in your blood.

The pulse oximeter has been provided to you so health staff can keep track of your health and determine if you're getting better

How do I use the pulse oximeter?

Rest for at least five minutes before using it.

Turn on the pulse oximeter and place it over your middle or index finger.

Place your hand on a flat surface and hold it still.

Keep the pulse oximeter on your finger for at least a minute or until the reading is stable

Write down your results so you and the health staff caring for you can keep track of your progress – blood oxygen level (as a percentage) and heart rate (beats per minute).

Tips for using the pulse oximeter

- The pulse oximeter will only work with normal nail and skin e.g. no significant bruising, band-aids etc.

- Make sure you remove any false (acrylic) nails or nail polish, and make sure your nails are cut short.

- Take your measurements several times a day.

- If you start to feel unwell with worsening symptoms, please take the measurements more often.

What do I do if my pulse oximeter isn't working?

If your pulse oximeter isn't working, refer to the instructions provided in the box or phone the health service that provided you with the device.

Further information

www.qld.gov.au/health/covidcare
National Coronavirus Helpline (intepreters available) - 1800 020 080
134 COVID (13 42 68) for testing and other COVID-19 advice
13 HEALTH (13 43 25 84), for confidential health advice from a registered nurse

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What do the results mean?

- A **normal heart rate** is from approximately **60-100 beats per minute**

- A **normal oxygen level** in the blood is **95% or higher.**

- For **Oxygen blood levels 92-94% please contact your General Practitioner or local hospital as soon as possible for additional advice.** Additionally, you could use the Queensland Health COVID Care self-checker or ring the National Coronavirus Hotline on 1800 020 080.

- **For oxygen blood levels less than 92%, please call '000' and request an ambulance.**

You should go to hospital or call Triple Zero (000) if you have severe symptoms like:

Difficulty breathing even when walking around the house

Breathing has worsened

Coughing up blood

Bad chest pains

Collapsing or fainting

Feeling cold and sweaty, with pale or blotchy skin

A rash that looks like small bruises or bleeding under the skin

Feeling agitated, confused or very drowsy

Stopping urinating or are urinating much less than usual

Your pulse oximeter says your oxygen level is 92% or less.