

# Using a pulse oximeter to check you are OK



# What's in this leaflet?



**Page 4: What is a pulse oximeter?**



**Page 6: How to use a pulse oximeter**



**Page 9: What to do with the information from the pulse oximeter**

## What's in this leaflet?



**Page 12:** When should I ask for medical help?



**Page 18:** Helping to keep you safe



**Page 20:** When you have finished with the pulse oximeter



**Page 22:** Your coronavirus diary

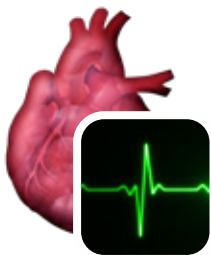
# What is this pulse oximeter?



You have been given a machine because you have coronavirus. This machine is called a pulse oximeter.



The pulse oximeter tests:



1. How fast your heart is beating.



2. How well you are breathing. To do this it checks how much oxygen is in your blood.

# What is this pulse oximeter?



**Knowing these things means doctors can tell if you are:**



**Getting better**

**or**



**Getting more unwell**



**This means you can get the treatment you need at the right time.**

# How to use this pulse oximeter



**Wash your hands before and after you use the pulse oximeter.**



**The pulse oximeter attaches to your finger and doesn't hurt.**



**Make sure the finger you are going to use does not have any nail varnish or a false nail on it.**

## How to use this pulse oximeter



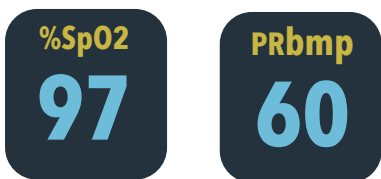
**Make sure your hand is warm to the touch. Then rest it on your chest for five minutes.**



**Switch the pulse oximeter on.**



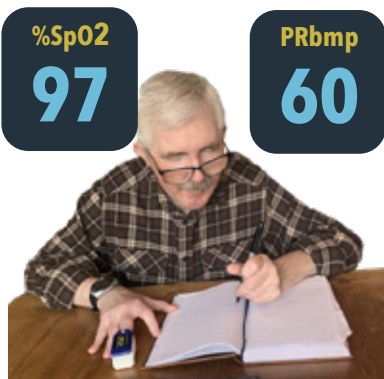
**Then attach the clip of the pulse oximeter to the finger next to your thumb, or your middle finger.**



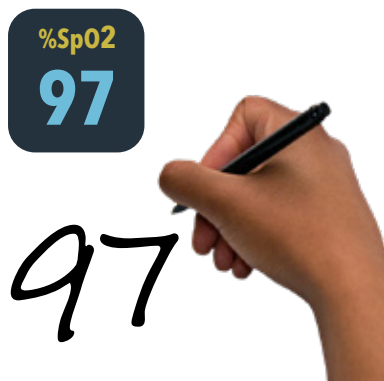
**Watch the numbers on the pulse oximeter.**



# How to use this pulse oximeter



When the numbers on the pulse oximeter have stopped changing, write the numbers down in **your coronavirus diary** on page 22.



This is called taking a reading.



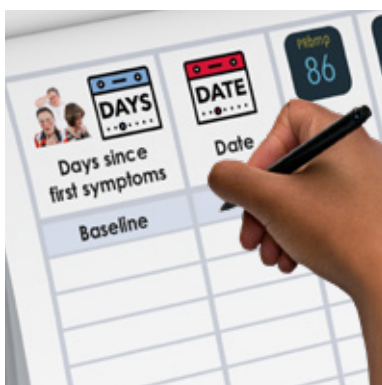
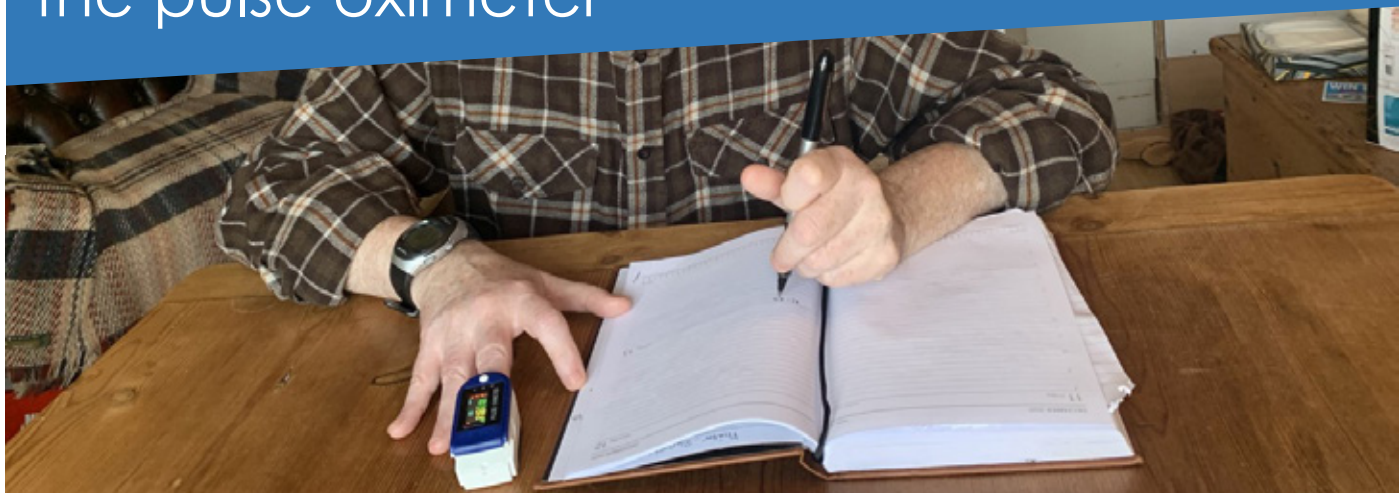
One number measures how fast your heart is beating.



One number measures how much oxygen is in your blood.



# What to do with your information from the pulse oximeter



Write your readings in the **your coronavirus diary** section on page 22.



Please let your doctor know if writing is difficult for you or you find tables difficult. They will help you to record the readings a different way.



You need to write down your readings three times every day at the same time each day.

# What to do with your information from the pulse oximeter

The times of day could be:



Morning



Afternoon



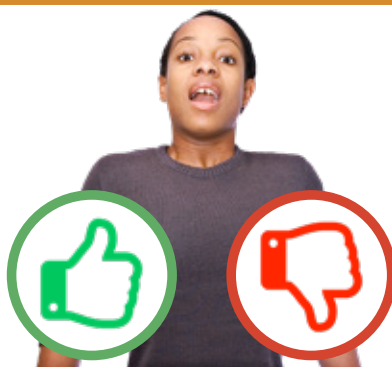
Evening



You should also test yourself if you begin to feel more unwell.



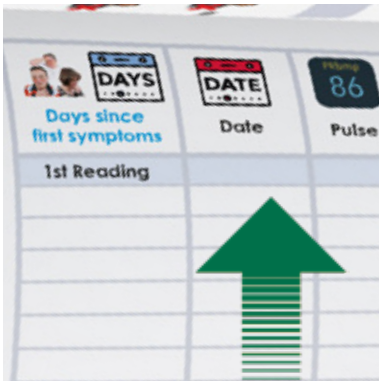
Write down how you feel in your diary.



For example:

Write down whether you are finding breathing easy or hard.

# What to do with your information from the pulse oximeter



You should write your first reading in the blue area of **your coronavirus diary** on page 23.



If you have a thermometer you can take your temperature too.



It is a good idea to write down your temperature if you can.

# When should I ask for medical help?



You need to go to your nearest Accident and Emergency (A&E) straight away or call 999 if any of these things happen:



You can't finish a short sentence when you are resting because you are breathless.

**For example:** "I can't finish this sentence."



Your breathing suddenly gets much worse within an hour.

## When should I ask for medical help?



**The blood oxygen number on the pulse oximeter stays at 92% or less.**



**Tell the person you speak to what the pulse oximeter says your blood oxygen number is.**



**You are coughing up blood.**



**You feel cold and sweaty with pale or blotchy skin.**

## When should I ask for medical help?



**You collapse or faint.**



**You develop a rash that does not fade when you roll a drinking glass over it:**



**You become restless, confused or very sleepy.**



**You have stopped peeing or are peeing much less than usual.**

## When should I ask for medical help?



**When you ring 999 tell the person you speak to that you might have coronavirus.**



**You can also tell them if you have a learning disability, you are autistic or both.**

# When should I ask for medical help?



Contact NHS 111 or your GP if you have one or more of the following symptoms. Tell the person you speak to you might have coronavirus.



You slowly start feeling more unwell or more breathless.



You are finding it hard to breathe when you get up.



The pulse oximeter shows your blood oxygen level is 94 or 93 or keeps being lower than normal.



# When should I ask for medical help?



**You feel like something is wrong.**

**That could be:**



**Feeling weaker than usual**

**Feeling very tired**



**Not wanting to eat**



**Peeing less than usual**



**You can't do the things  
you normally can**

# Helping to keep you safe



Are you  
OK?



**It is important that someone checks on you regularly.**



Are you  
OK?

**If you are staying away from other people in the same house as you, talking on your phone or through a doorway could be better than sending text messages.**



**This means they will be able to hear if you are getting more breathless or unwell.**

## Helping to keep you safe



**If you live on your own, try and arrange to contact someone regularly.**



**Ask that person to ring you if you don't contact them as planned.**



**Ask them to get help if you don't answer.**



**If you are still unwell after three weeks, please contact your doctor.**

# When you have finished with the pulse oximeter



**You will normally have the pulse oximeter for 14 days from the time you first became unwell with coronavirus.**



**After the 14 days return the pulse oximeter.**



**If you need to stay at home ask someone to return the pulse oximeter for you.**

When you have finished with the pulse oximeter



**The pulse oximeter needs to be returned in the bag provided so that it can be cleaned before being given to someone else.**

# Your coronavirus diary



**First Name:**



**Surname:**



**Date of Birth:**



**Age:**



**NHS Number:**



**Do you live alone?**



**Yes**



**No**



**Do you have a carer at home?**



**Yes**



**No**



Days since first symptoms



Date



Pulse



Oxygen Level %



Temp °C



Are you Feeling:



Better Same Worse



Is your breathing:



Better Same Worse

1st Reading







# Your coronavirus diary



Here is some information about the headings on **your coronavirus diary**.



## Days since first symptoms

This means you write the number of days it is since you first had any symptoms.



So if it is five days since your first symptom started put '5' under that day.



Write down your temperature if you have a thermometer.





## Using a pulse oximeter to check you are OK

