



# Virtual Ward

Patient Information Leaflet

# What is a Virtual Ward?

If you have recently tested positive for Covid-19, your doctor may have explained to you that they will be supporting you to recover at home in what is known as a 'virtual ward.'

Using a device called a 'pulse oximeter' you will take a number of 'readings' each day and submit them to the Virtual Ward. The Virtual Ward Team will look at your readings remotely to monitor you and will make sure that any issues are dealt with as soon as possible.

The Virtual Ward Team will be keeping an eye on you and will give you support and advice based on your readings. There are a variety of ways that you can communicate with your Virtual Ward Team and they will discuss options with you on your induction call.

## What is a Pulse Oximeter?

A Pulse Oximeter takes two readings: the **%SpO2** reading measures the level of oxygen in your blood; the pulse (a measure of how fast your heart is beating) will be shown with a **heart symbol/min**.

The pulse oximeter can be used in the safety of your own home.

## What do I do with my Pulse Oximeter readings?

You will need to record each of your readings in a COVID diary as instructed by the Virtual Ward Team. They will then use this information to help look after you.

## How to take your readings

**You use a pulse oximeter by placing it on your finger (usually the middle or index finger) to generate a reading.**

- **Step 1:** Remove any nail varnish or false nails and warm your hands if cold.
- **Step 2:** Rest for at least 5 minutes before taking your reading.
- **Step 3:** Keep your fingers in a relaxed position. Rest your hand on your chest at heart level.
- **Step 4:** Insert the tip of your middle or index finger into the Pulse Oximeter so that the finger tip is pressed against the end and the nail is covered by the device. Check that it is on.

**If you do not get a reading within 30 seconds or so, try a different finger.**

- **Step 5:** The reading takes time to steady. Keep the Pulse Oximeter in place for at least a minute to allow this.
- **Step 6:** Take the reading after a minute or so. If the reading continues to go up and down and won't stabilise, just take a middle reading.
- **Step 7:** Add the reading to your COVID diary.



You will need to take readings using the pulse oximeter **2 times a day**, though you can take extra readings if you feel a change in your health or if asked to by the team looking after you.

We suggest that you take your readings at around: 8am and 3pm (or as close to those times as possible).

If you have a smart phone or smart speaker it may be helpful to set daily reminders to help you take your readings at the recommended times.

The Virtual Ward Team will advise you how to let them know your readings and also how often they are going to contact you.

## **How the Virtual Ward will support you**

The Virtual Ward Team will monitor your readings using your COVID diary across the working day, from Monday to Sunday. If they worsen you may be contacted by the team, and they will give you some advice and support. To help you quickly self assess in case your symptoms worsen quickly, the team will advise you to use the information below to assess yourself and what action you need to take. This can also be used in the evenings or at weekends.

### **Good signs and readings that show that you may be improving include:**

- Gradual improvement
- Fully mobile, able to manage stairs, not confused
- Normal eating and drinking
- Oxygen level (measured with the pulse oximeter) is consistently above 95%
- Pulse Range 50-90 beats per minute

### **At Higher Risk, Phone your GP or 111 for urgent medical attention: If you have any of the following signs/symptoms or readings:**

- Getting more unwell
- Unable to speak in full sentences due to breathlessness
- Too weak to get out of bed
- Oxygen level (measured with the pulse oximeter) is 93-94%
- Pulse persistently over 90 beats per minute at rest
- Not eating and drinking
- Fever not responding to cooling down and paracetamol

### **Call 999 for Urgent Assessment: If you have any of the following signs/symptoms or readings:**

- Your health is rapidly worsening over a period of hours
- Short of breath sitting quietly
- Your oxygen level (measured with the pulse oximeter) is consistently less than 92% or below; meaning more than once within an hour
- Blue lips or face
- Pulse over 100 at rest after repeat testing
- Severe or sudden onset of chest pain
- Cold, Clammy or mottled skin

## Treating your symptoms at home

There is currently no specific treatment for Covid-19 but you can often ease the symptoms at home. If you have a high temperature, get lots of rest and drink plenty of fluids to avoid dehydration. Paracetamol can help if you feel uncomfortable.

**If you're worried about your symptoms and need medical advice, visit NHS 111 online or call NHS 111.**

## Returning the Equipment

When the healthcare workers looking after you are happy that you're feeling better and no longer need to be monitored, they will make arrangements for you to return the equipment so that it can be used to benefit other patients.

For further advice please contact:

**Patient Advice and Liaison Service,**

Gloucestershire Clinical Commissioning Group,

**FREEPOST RRYY-KSGT-AGBR,**

Sanger House, 5220 Valiant Court,

Gloucester Business Park, GL3 4FE

Telephone: **01452 566698** Email: [glccg.pals@nhs.net](mailto:glccg.pals@nhs.net)

To discuss receiving this information in large print or Braille please ring **0800 015 1548**.

To discuss receiving this information in other formats please contact:

এই তথ্য অন্য ফর্মাটে পেতে আলোচনার জন্য দয়া করে যোগাযোগ করুন

如需以其他格式接收此信息，请联系

V případě, že potřebujete obdržet tuto informaci v jiném formátu, kontaktujte prosím

આ માહિતી બીજા ફોર્મેટમાં મળવાની ચર્ચા કરવામાટે કૃપાકરી સંપર્ક કરો

Aby uzyskać te informacje w innych formatach, prosimy o kontakt

По вопросам получения информации в других форматах просим обращаться

Ak si želáte získať túto informáciu v inom formáte, kontaktujte prosím

**0800 015 1548**