

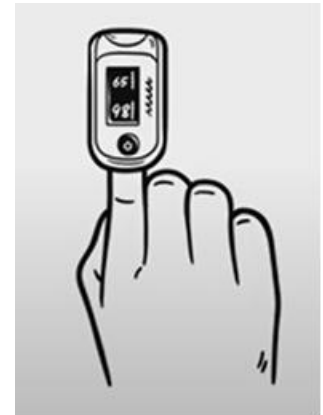
What is a pulse oximeter?

A pulse oximeter measures the level of oxygen in the blood. It can also measure the speed that the heart is beating/pulse rate

How to use a pulse oximeter

It is important to use the pulse oximeter as instructed to get an accurate reading.

- Remove any nail polish or false nails (false nails or nail varnish can affect how the oximeter works).
- Make sure the person tested has been sitting down for at least five minutes before taking the measurement.
- Warm the hand if it is cold.
- Switch the pulse oximeter on and place it on the middle or index finger (see diagram).
- Rest the hand in the middle of the 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.



What the readings mean

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

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



What you should do

Blood oxygen level	What you should do
95% and above	Continue to monitor three times a day
93% and 94%	Check again over the next hour making sure that hands are warm, and the probe is place correctly. If persistently within the amber range <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In hours call the GP • Out of Hours call VOCARE; 0300 123 2937
92% and below	Check again and if persistently 92% or less to call 999

- If otherwise feeling well, but the blood oxygen is below 95%, rest for a further 5 minutes and repeat the measurement.
- If it is still below 95% follow the instructions in the table above.

People with darker skin

There is evidence that pulse oximeters may underestimate blood oxygen levels in individuals with darker skin - a baseline oxygen saturation should be taken when first assessing SpO2 rates and any changes in readings then compared to this baseline.