Health Navigator New Zealand

Aotearoa e te toa!   
A series of resources for people with COVID in the community

# Transcript: How to use a pulse oximeter

## [Introduction]

| **Audio** | **Visual** |
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| [Guitar music] | A man’s hands hold a red pulse oximeter  The video title and credits are shown on screen  How to use a Pulse Oximeter  Health Care Home logo, Health Navigator New Zealand logo, Ministry of Health logo |
| [Guitar music]  [Man] Kia ora tatou. So you're at home feeling under the weather with COVID.  Your healthcare team will provide you with heaps of information about how to stay safe at home, including how to keep an eye on your symptoms and when to call for help. | A man stands in his kitchen, wearing a dressing gown. He’s making a cup of tea. |
| [Guitar music]  [Man] One of the things they might give you is a pulse oximeter. You may not have heard of these things before, so listen up, because using one might become part of your daily checks. | He takes the tea into his daughter’s bedroom. She is in bed, reading.  He sets the tea down and sits at the foot of her bed.  He holds up a small red device – a pulse oximeter. |
| [Guitar music]  [Man] A pulse oximeter uses a tiny light beam to measure oxygen levels in your blood cells, and your pulse.  [Man] On your pulse oximeter, your pulse, also known as your heart rate, is measured in heartbeats per minute or PRbpm.  Your oxygen levels are measured as a percentage and could show as SpO2% on the oximeter. | Text is shown on screen:  What is a pulse oximeter?  The man holds the pulse oximeter on his finger.  Text is shown on screen:  Pulse-Heart rate   * Beats per minute * PRbpm   Oxygen levels   * Measured out of 100% * SpO2% = Saturation percentage of oxygen |
| [Guitar music]  [Man] COVID can cause your blood levels of oxygen to fall or your heart rate to get faster. These are signs that you might need help, or you might need to call an ambulance. | The man is sitting on the foot of the bed.  Text is shown on screen: Call 111 |
| [Guitar music]  [Man] If you’ve been asked to use one, you need to use it three times a day until you’ve recovered from COVID. | The man is sitting on the foot of the bed. |

## [Understanding the readings and signs to watch for]

| **Audio** | **Visual** |
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| [Guitar music]  [Man] Understanding the readings is easy.  A normal pulse for adults is between 50 and 99.  A pulse of 100 to 119 means you need to tell your healthcare team or GP straightaway.  A pulse of 120 or more, you should call 111 for urgent care.  Normal oxygen levels are 95 to 100%.  For an oxygen reading of 92 to 94%,contact your healthcare team.  An oxygen reading below 92% means you should call 111 for urgent care. | Text is shown on screen:  Understanding the readings  The man and daughter lie in bed together, reading.  Text is shown on screen:  Pulse/Heart rate   * 50-99 PRbpm = Normal * 100-119 PRbpm = Tell your healthcare team or GP * 120 PRbpm or above = Call 111   Oxygen levels   * 95-100% = Normal\* * 92-94% = Contact your healthcare team or GP * Below 92% = Call 111   \*People with pre-existing respiratory conditions may have a different ‘normal’. Please talk to your healthcare team or GO about what your reading should be. |
| [Guitar music]  [Man] Now it's important to know the difference between the pulse and the oxygen readings. Don't mix these two up. | The man sits on the bed. |
| [Guitar music]  [Man] Don't just rely on a pulse oximeter to work out your oxygen levels. You must also watch for these signs that must be reported immediately:   * blueish colouring on your face, lips or nails; shortness of breath * difficulty breathing or a cough that gets worse * restlessness and discomfort * chest pain or tightness * fast or racing pulse. | Text is shown on screen:  Signs to watch for  The man and daughter lie in bed together, reading.  Text is shown on screen:   * Blueish colouring on your face, lips or nails * Shortness of breath * Difficulty breathing or a cough that gets worse * Restlessness and discomfort * Chest pain or tightness * Fast or racing pulse |

## [How to use a pulse oximeter]

| **Audio** | **Visual** |
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| [Guitar music]  [Man] You're probably wondering how to use one of these things. | The man sits on the bed and holds the pulse oximeter in his hand. |
| [Guitar music]  [Man] Wash your hands and remove any nail polish or false nails. | Text is shown on screen:  Prepare  The man removes polish from his daughter’s nails. |
| [Guitar music]  [Man] Rest for at least five minutes before taking the reading. If your hands are cold, warm them by rubbing them together.  Your hand should be at waist level. Try resting your hand on a table or the arm of a chair. | The man sits calmly at a dining table. He rubs his hands together, then places them on the table. |
| [Guitar music]  [Man] Make sure the batteries are inserted into the pulse oximeter and try to have a supply of new batteries handy.  Switch the pulse oximeter on, the display will light up. Squeeze to open and put your finger in until it touches the end. It's best on the middle or index finger. If it doesn't work, try another finger.  Keep your hands still for one to two minutes until your pulse reading is steady and your oxygen number has not changed for five seconds or more. If your numbers are not steady, try a different finger. | Text is shown on screen:  Take a reading  The man puts fresh batteries into the pulse oximeter, then turns it on. The display lights up.  He places the pulse oximeter onto his middle finger, then moves it to his index finger. He then holds his hand still and waits for the reading to appear. |
| [Guitar music]  [Man] Record both numbers to track any changes.  Your pulse and oxygen level numbers are easy to mix up. So record them carefully.  Keeping your diary up to date is really important. So your healthcare team knows what's going on.  Measure and record your numbers three times a day at about the same time every day.  You should take extra measurements if you feel a change in your health or your symptoms. | Text is shown on screen:  Record your numbers  The man holds up the oximeter, and text on screen points to the oxygen level (96) and the Pulse/Heart rate (76) that are displayed.  The man writes down his numbers on a tracking sheet. |

## [Pulse oximeter for children]

| **Audio** | **Visual** |
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| [Guitar music]  [Man] There's a special pulse oximeter for our young ones. Now most children with COVID won’t need one and will only receive a child's pulse oximeter if they do. | Text is shown on screen:  Pulse oximeter for children  The man sits on the bed, with his daughter on his lap. |
| [Guitar music]  [Man] Children over 30kg, about 10 years or older, can use an adult pulse oximeter as long as their finger goes all the way to the end.  Using an adult pulse oximeter on smaller children may give an inaccurate reading. So for children under 30kg, that's most nine year olds or younger, such as Willow, they’ll need a child's pulse oximeter.  Prepare the oximeter and record as you do for adults, starting with hand washing and removing nail polish. | The man removes nail polish from the girl’s middle finger, then places the pulse oximeter on the middle finger and waits for her readings to be displayed.  The man records her readings on a tracking sheet. |
| [Guitar music]  [Man] For kids, oxygen levels are the same as adults. | The man and girl sit together on the bed.  Text is shown on screen:  Oxygen levels   * 95-100% = Normal * 92-94% = Contact your healthcare team or GP * Below 92% = Call 111 |
| [Guitar music]  [Man] Remember, don’t just rely on the pulse oximeter.  Other symptoms of low oxygen levels that need to be reported immediately can be if your child has blue lips and tongue, has difficulty breathing, has episodes of irregular breathing or stopped breathing, is unconscious or you can’t wake them up properly. | The man sits on the bed, then he and daughter lie together on the bed, reading.   * Has blue lips and tongue * Has difficulty breathing * Has episodes of irregular breathing or stopped breathing * Is unconscious or you can’t wake them up properly |
| [Guitar music]  [Man] If at any time a child has trouble breathing or the symptoms keep getting worse. You know what to do.  [Girl] Call 111.  [Man] Tika. Pō mārie.  [Girl] Pō mārie, Dad. | The man sits at the foot of the girl’s bed.  He gets up, kisses her forehead, and sets her eyeglasses on the side table.  Text is shown on screen:  For more information, visit hn.org.nz/oximeter. |

## [Conclusion]

| **Audio** | **Visual** |
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| [Guitar music] | Text is shown on screen:  Limitations in using pulse oximeters  If you have any breathing problems, phone your healthcare team for advice.  Do not rely on a pulse oximeter alone to assess your health condition or oxygen level. |
| [Guitar music] | Text is shown on screen:  That's because a pulse oximeter is only a measurement device. And there's lots of things that can affect the accuracy of a pulse oximeter reading:   * Poor blood circulation * Skin pigmentation/colouring * Skin thickness and temperature * Current tobacco use * Fingernail polish * Artificial nails, tattoos and dyes * Cleanliness of device |
| [Guitar music] | Credits are shown:  Health Care Home logo  Healthcarehome.org.nz  Health Navigator New Zealand logo  Healthnavigator.org.nz  Ministry of Health logo |