

Suspected coronavirus (COVID-19): **Important information to keep you safe while isolating at home**

This leaflet is for patients with suspected coronavirus who have not been admitted to hospital and will be isolating at home.

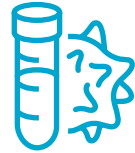
Version 2: July 2021





Staying at home

- You may have coronavirus. You don't need to be in hospital at this time, but it is important that you self-isolate.
- If your condition worsens please follow the information below and seek medical advice quickly.
- You should assume you have COVID-19 until a test shows you do not.
- Until then, you must self-isolate for at least 10 days along with anyone in your household as they may have coronavirus without showing any symptoms.
- For more information about self-isolation and self-care visit: www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/self-isolation-and-treatment/how-to-treat-symptoms-at-home and www.gov.uk/coronavirus.
- If you need help from a volunteer to deliver food or medicines visit <https://nhsvolunteerresponders.org.uk>



Arranging your COVID-19 test

- Anyone in England with COVID-19 symptoms can have a test.
- You can apply for a test online at gov.uk, or call the Coronavirus Testing Contact Centre free on 119 from 7am to 11pm.
- You may be able to choose between going to a testing site or getting a home test kit.
- **Do not wait** – wherever possible the test should be done within eight days of showing symptoms.



Get family and friends to check in with you

It is important that someone checks on you regularly. If you are isolating from other people in the same house, talking on your phone or through a doorway could be better than text messages. It will help them hear if you are becoming more breathless or unwell. Even if you live alone, you should arrange to contact someone regularly. Ask them to ring you, if you don't make contact as planned, ask them to seek help. **If you are still unwell after four weeks, please contact your GP.**

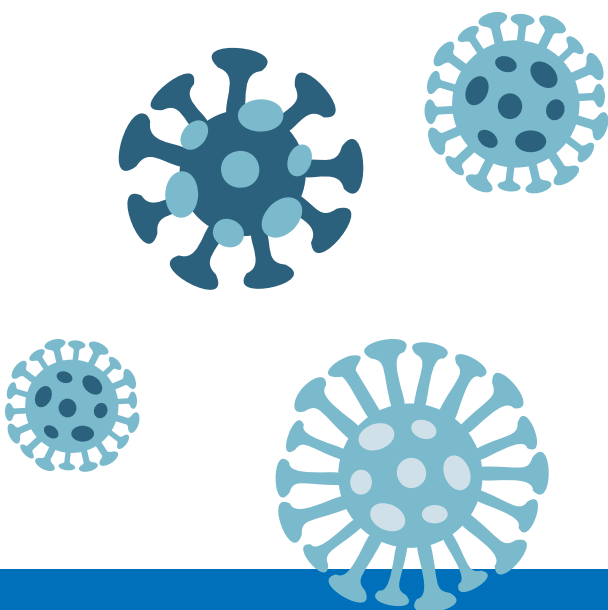
Recovering from COVID-19



Mild COVID-19 symptoms

These are common symptoms. You may not have all of these but still feel unwell.

- High temperature: you feel hot to touch on your chest and back. If you have access to a thermometer, a reading of 38 degrees celsius or higher
- Cough
- Muscle ache or tiredness
- Mild chest pain
- Dizziness or headache
- Loss of taste or sense of smell
- Diarrhoea and vomiting
- Rashes.



Supporting your recovery

- Most people recover from coronavirus within four weeks.
- You may have mild symptoms and feel unwell for a short time before slowly starting to feel better.
- To help you recover, you may wish to try:
 - Rest
 - Paracetamol or ibuprofen (providing there is no medical reason for you not to take it)
 - Regular fluids
- Coronavirus can leave some people feeling unwell for a long time - this is known as long COVID.



For further support on managing your symptoms at home and advice on your recovery visit: www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/self-isolation-and-treatment and www.yourcovidrecovery.nhs.uk



When and where to seek medical advice

Contact NHS 111

If you experience any of the following COVID-19 symptoms, you should contact 111 as soon as possible.

- Feeling breathless or difficulty breathing, especially when standing up or moving
- Severe muscle aches or tiredness
- Shakes or shivers
- If you use a pulse oximeter, your blood oxygen level is 94% or 93% or continues to be lower than your usual reading where your normal oxygen saturation is below 95% (re-take a reading within an hour first)
- Sense that something is wrong (general weakness, severe tiredness, loss of appetite, peeing much less than normal, unable to care for yourself – simple tasks like washing and dressing or making food).

You can access 111:

- Online at www.111.nhs.uk
- By phone 111
- Via your GP.

You should tell the operator you may have coronavirus.

Attend your nearest A&E within an hour or call 999

A minority of people with COVID-19 will suffer more severe symptoms. You should attend A&E as quickly as possible or call 999 immediately if you experience the following:

- Your blood oxygen levels are 92% or less (retake your reading immediately first)
- You are unable to complete short sentences when at rest due to breathlessness
- Your breathing gets worse suddenly.

OR if you develop these more general signs of serious illness:

- Cough up blood
- Feel cold and sweaty with pale or blotchy skin
- Collapse or faint
- Develop a rash that doesn't fade when you roll a glass over it
- Become agitated, confused or very drowsy
- Stopped passing urine or are passing urine much less than usual.

You should tell the operator you may have coronavirus and if you use a pulse oximeter give your oxygen saturation reading. These symptoms require urgent medical attention.

Remember - if you're pregnant, you should follow the guidance on pages 6 and 7



Blood oxygen and pulse oximeters

Oxygen level in the blood (the oxygen saturation) can be measured by using a pulse oximeter, a small device that you attach to your finger to take a reading. If you use a pulse oximeter and your blood oxygen level becomes lower, follow the guidance in this leaflet on where to seek advice. Even if you do not feel breathless, your oxygen levels may be low.

If you are at high risk of becoming seriously unwell, then you may be asked by your GP or health professional to monitor your oxygen levels at home using a pulse oximeter. This could be if you're aged 65 or over, or clinically extremely vulnerable. If you're using a pulse oximeter at home, make sure it has a CE mark, UKCA mark or CE UKNI mark. This means that the device will work properly and is safe if used correctly. If you've been given one to use at home, watch an [NHS YouTube video about how to use a pulse oximeter and when to get help](#).

It might help to write down your oxygen level readings. Keeping a record of regular readings makes it easier to see any changes. It can also help if you need to speak to a healthcare professional.



100	99	98	97	96	95	94	93	92	91	90 or less
<p>Normal blood oxygen level for most people – stay at home and continue to check your blood oxygen level regularly.</p>						<p>If you continue to record these blood oxygen levels contact NHS 111 or your GP as soon as possible.</p>		<p>If you continue to record blood oxygen levels of 92% or less attend your nearest A&E immediately or call 999.</p> <p>Remember - if you're pregnant, you should follow the guidance on pages 6 and 7.</p>		

It is important to seek help if you feel more unwell with any of the above symptoms. If your condition worsens, do not wait but act immediately.



If you are pregnant or have recently given birth

If you are pregnant or have recently given birth and have any concerns about your or your baby's health, or if you have any questions about how self-isolation might affect any of your appointments, please do not hesitate to contact your midwife or maternity team. **If you do not have a midwife or maternity team call a GP or call 111 if you cannot get help.**



Call your midwife or maternity team immediately if:

- your baby is moving less than usual
- you cannot feel your baby moving
- there is a change to your baby's usual pattern of movements
- you have any bleeding from your vagina
- you're feeling very anxious or worried
- you have a headache that does not go away
- you cannot cope with your COVID-19 symptoms at home
- you have a high temperature (37.3°C or above)
- you feel unsafe at any time.

Do not wait until the next day – call immediately, even if it's the middle of the night.

Call 999 if:

- you feel very unwell or think there's something seriously wrong
- you have severe chest pain
- cough up blood
- feel cold and sweaty with pale or blotchy skin
- collapse or faint
- develop a rash that doesn't fade when you roll a glass over it
- become agitated, confused or very drowsy
- stopped passing urine or are passing urine much less than usual
- you are unable to complete short sentences when at rest due to breathlessness
- your breathing gets worse suddenly.



If you have coronavirus and you are pregnant, you might get sick quicker. This could affect you or your baby.

To ensure you and your baby receive personal and safe care your GP, midwife or maternity team will assess your symptoms. In some cases you may be advised to monitor your oxygen levels at home using a pulse oximeter. They will advise you on what to do next.

If you record your blood oxygen levels and they are becoming lower you should contact your GP, midwife or maternity team.

If your blood oxygen levels are 94% or less, you should contact your hospital immediately or call 999.

This requires urgent medical attention.

TRUST YOUR INSTINCTS!

- if in doubt, get checked out!
- voice your concerns
- ensure your concerns are heard
- do not wait until the next day or your next appointment.



For more information please visit: www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/people-at-higher-risk/pregnancy-and-coronavirus

Pulse oximeter for heart rate and blood oxygen level

Your doctor has given you, or your carer, this pulse oximeter and diary because you have symptoms of COVID-19.

A pulse oximeter helps you monitor how fast your heart is beating and the level of oxygen in your blood.

Blood oxygen level is the most accurate way of keeping an eye on your progress with COVID-19

An ideal blood oxygen level (%SpO₂) is between 95% and 99%. An ideal heart rate is between 50 and 90 beats per minute (bpm). You will need to alert your doctor or 111 if it drops below 95% and your heart rate (bpm) goes above 100. If your blood oxygen levels do drop below 88% and your pulse goes above 110 please call 999 immediately.

How to use a pulse oximeter

Follow these instructions to make sure the pulse oximeter you have been provided gives an accurate reading:

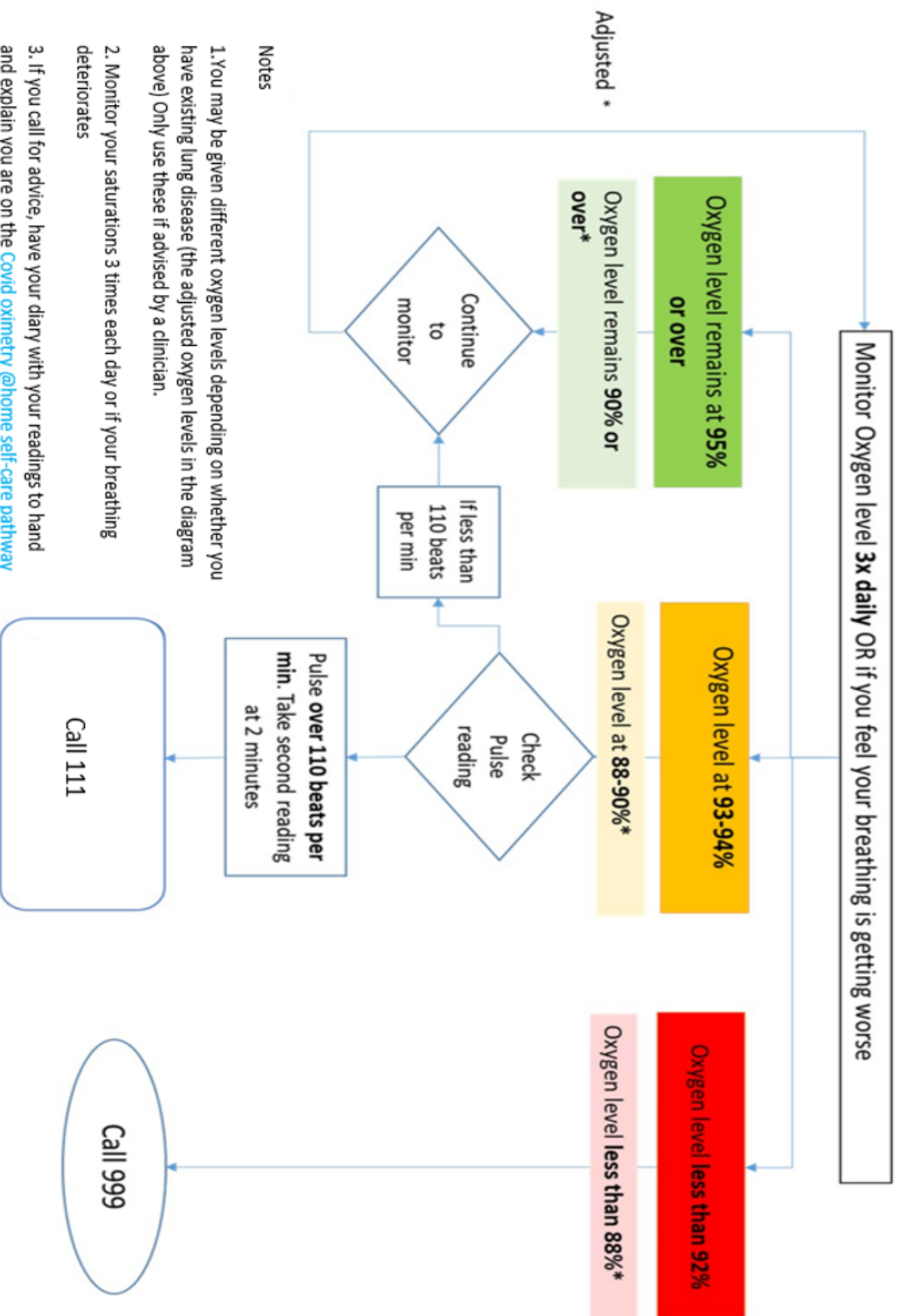
- Remove any nail polish or false nails and warm your hands if cold.
- Make sure you have been resting for at least five minutes before taking your measurement.
- Rest your hand on your chest at heart level and hold still.
- Switch the pulse oximeter on and place it on your finger. It works best on your middle or index finger. It should not be used on your ear.
- The reading takes time to steady. Keep the pulse oximeter in place for at least a minute, or longer if the reading keeps changing.
- Record the highest result once the reading has not changed for five seconds.
- Be careful to identify which reading is your heart rate (bpm) and which is your oxygen level (%SpO₂).

Recording & acting on the results

Record the results in the diary below.

Your first measurement is your baseline – so record this in the highlighted blue area. Then take recordings three times a day at the same time each day – for example, when you normally eat in the morning, at lunchtime and in the evening. Take extra measurements if you feel there has been a change in your health. Please also record changes in how you are feeling and your breathing.

Keep track of your temperature if you can. However, as long as your oxygen level and breathing are normal, you do not need to contact your GP/NHS 111 if you have a temperature or other symptoms, such as cough, muscle aches, tiredness and change in taste or smell. Paracetamol and regular fluids can help with these symptoms, and most people will get better by themselves within two or three weeks. Please see the NHS website for information on self-isolation or how to access care <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/self-isolation-and-treatment/>



Notes

1. You may be given different oxygen levels depending on whether you have existing lung disease (the adjusted oxygen levels in the diagram above) Only use these if advised by a clinician.
2. Monitor your saturations 3 times each day or if your breathing deteriorates
3. If you call for advice, have your diary with your readings to hand and explain you are on the [Covid oximetry @home self-care pathway](mailto:Covid.oximetry@home-self-care-pathway)