

Your virtual ward

This leaflet is for patients who have been discharged home following a stay in hospital with Coronavirus (Covid-19). It explains how you can monitor yourself at home to make sure your body's oxygen levels remain safe.

Virtual ward phone: 0118 322 5201 (9am-5pm, Mon-Sun)

Out of hours: 111 or 999

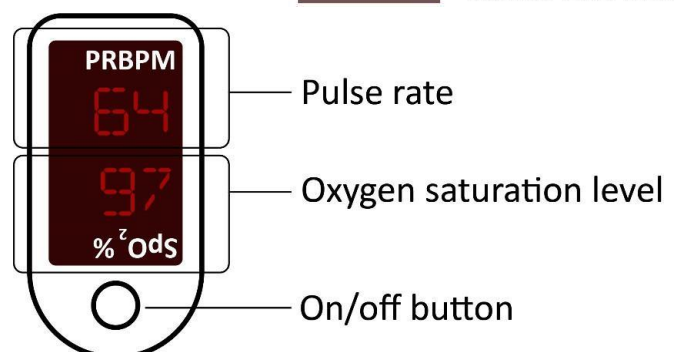
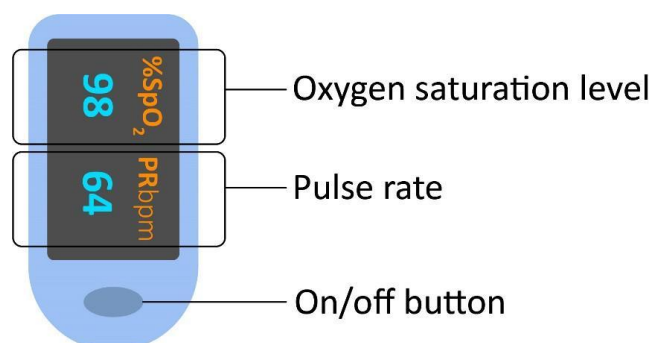
Maternity triage: 0118 322 7304

What is a virtual ward?

The purpose of our virtual ward is to monitor you while allowing you to stay in the comfort of your own home. Your clinician has determined that you are safe to go home today, but some people may get worse, rather than better, after leaving hospital. For this reason, we have given you a pulse oximeter. By checking the readings on your pulse oximeter daily, we can make sure that you are improving. If you do become more unwell, we can take appropriate actions in a timely manner.

Using your pulse oximeter

- Clip the oximeter onto your finger
- Make sure your fingers are warm
- Remove any nail varnish before attaching the probe
- After 5–10 seconds, the probe will give you two different numbers – an oxygen saturation level (abbreviated to SpO₂) and a pulse rate (abbreviated to PR or BPM)
- We are interested in both readings



Recording oxygen levels

- Record your oxygen saturations 4 times a day, while resting and then after taking 40 brisk steps

Day	Morning		Midday		Afternoon		Evening	
	At rest	After walking	At rest	After walking	At rest	After walking	At rest	After walking
Day 1								
Day 2								
Day 3								
Day 4								
Day 5								

Virtual appointments

- If required, our team will phone you
- We will ask about your symptoms and ask you to give us a reading from your pulse oximeter at rest and after 40 brisk steps
- If you have not heard from us by 1pm on the first day after you were sent home from hospital, call our virtual ward phone number (at the top of the first page)

Alarm signs and what to do next

Seek help via 111 or 999 in the following cases:

- If your oxygen saturations are persistently 94% or less
- If your oxygen saturations drop by 6% or more after taking 40 brisk steps
- If you become more short of breath or think your symptoms are worsening
- If you develop new chest pain that is worse when you take deep breaths
- If you cough up blood
- If you have one-sided leg swelling and/or tenderness
- If you have persistent vomiting and are struggling to keep fluids down
- During working hours, you can also call our virtual ward number if you are not sure

If you have any questions or concerns, do not hesitate to call our virtual ward number – we're happy to help as we know this can be very stressful and scary.

0118 322 5201

If you are pregnant

In addition to the above alarm signs, if there are any concerns about the following, phone maternity triage (0118 322 7304):

- Reduced fetal movements
- Vaginal bleeding
- Discharge/fluid from the vagina
- Abdominal pain
- Contractions
- Generalised itching
- Symptoms of pre-eclampsia:
 - Severe headache
 - Epigastric pain
 - Visual disturbances e.g., flashing lights
 - Nausea/vomiting
 - Severe swelling of face, hands or feet

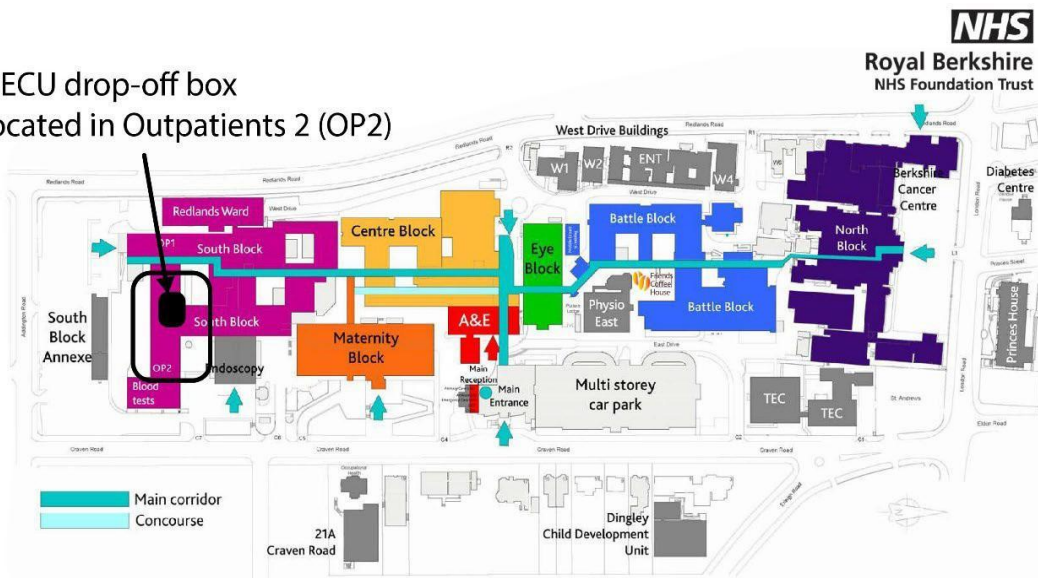


Returning the pulse oximeter

Once you have recovered, please return the pulse oximeter to the drop off box inside the Ambulatory Emergency Care Unit (AECU) in South Block– see map. Open Mon-Fri, 9am-5pm.

Do not go to the Emergency Department (A&E).

AECU drop-off box
located in Outpatients 2 (OP2)



To find out more about our Trust visit www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk

Please ask if you need this information in another language or format.

Acute Medical Unit (AMU), March 2021

Next review due: March 2023

Compassionate

Aspirational

Resourceful

Excellent

Your virtual ward (pulse oximeter at home), March 2021