



Pneumonia Virtual Acute Care Unit

This leaflet is for patients who are discharged home following a diagnosis of pneumonia (chest infection) and who require ongoing monitoring of symptoms and possible side effects of antibiotics.

VACU telephone: 0118 322 5201 (8am-8pm, Mon-Sun)

Out of hours: 111 or 999



What is the Pneumonia Virtual Acute Care Unit?

The purpose of the Virtual Acute Care Unit is to enable you to return home sooner but still receive hospital care, by remotely monitoring your symptoms and response to ongoing treatment. Your clinician has determined that you are safe to go home with monitoring by the Virtual Acute Care Unit (VACU) team. Monitoring will be needed until you have completed your course of antibiotics. You may also be given equipment, such as a pulse oximeter, temperature probe, and a blood pressure monitor, to check your readings, so we can make sure that you are improving. If you do become more unwell, the VACU team will ensure you receive appropriate and timely treatment.

What will happen after I go home?

Once you return home, a member of the VACU team will call to:

- Check your symptoms and to check for any side effects of your treatment, until we determine you are getting better.
- Ask you to give us your readings from your monitor.
- Arrange an appointment slot for regular blood tests to monitor your infection markers.
- Update you with the results of your blood tests.
- If you have not heard from us by 1pm on the first day after arriving home, call the Virtual Acute Care Unit number (0118 322 5201) 8am-8pm Monday-Sunday. You can also call this number if you have any questions or concerns.

Your medications

- Please read the patient information leaflet from your antibiotics packet, which will explain possible side effects to look out for. The VACU team clinician will also ask about these side effects during the regular telephone calls.
- It is important that you take your medications exactly as prescribed to ensure effective treatment of the bacteria that has infected the joint.
- If you are struggling with keeping anything down because you feel nauseous, let us know and we may need to prescribe anti-sickness medication or find an alternative antibiotic after

discussion with the consultant microbiologist (doctor specialising in the diagnosis, treatment and prevention of infectious diseases).

- Even if you start to feel better, you should still finish your course of antibiotics.

Alarm signs and what to do next

Seek help via our VACU number, 111 or 999 in the following cases:

- If your oxygen saturations are **persistently 94% or less**.
- If the top number of your blood pressure is **persistently less than 100**.
- If your heart rate at rest is **persistently greater than 110**.
- If your temperature is **persistently greater than 38 degrees and not coming down with paracetamol**.
- If you have **diarrhoea** and / or **vomiting**.
- If you are **more short of breath**.
- If you develop **worsening chest pain**.

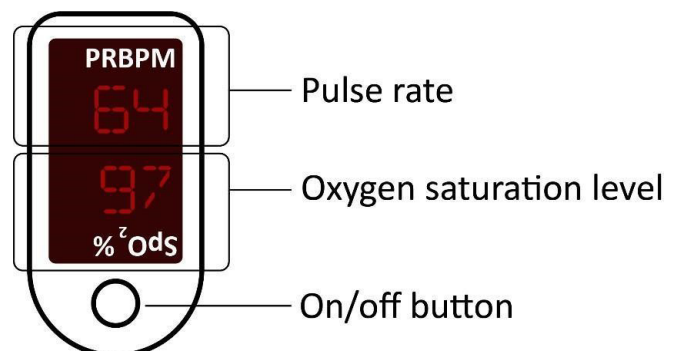
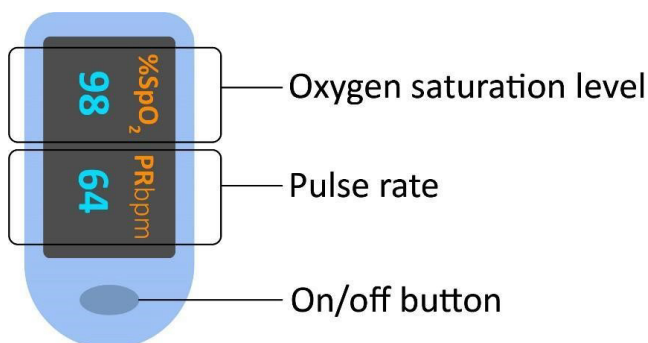
During working hours, you can also call our VACU number if you are not sure.

If you have any questions or concerns, do not hesitate to call our Virtual Acute Care Unit number – we are happy to help as we know this can be very stressful and scary.

0118 322 5201

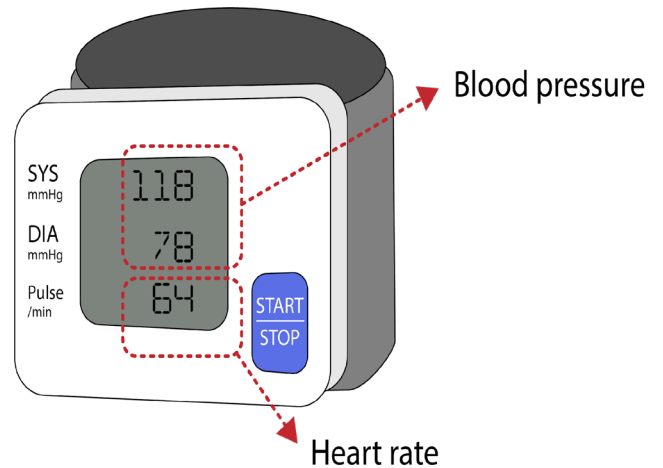
Instructions for using your pulse oximeter at home

- Make sure your fingers are warm.
- Remove any nail varnish before attaching the probe.
- Clip the oximeter onto your finger.
- Sit up straight and rest for a few minutes before taking measurements.
- 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.

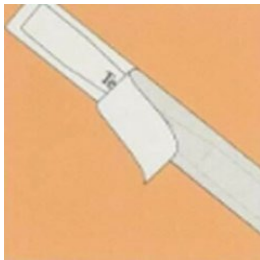


Using your blood pressure monitor at home

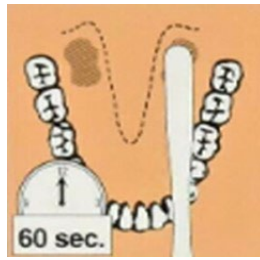
- Ensure you are seated comfortably and rest for a few minutes before taking the readings.
- Attach the cuff to your wrist, against your skin (and not over clothing).
- Press the START/STOP button to start measuring your blood pressure – the cuff will pump up, which may feel a bit uncomfortable for a short period.
- The monitor will give you three readings.
- The top two readings are your blood pressure.
- The bottom number is your heart rate.
- You can view the full instruction manual by searching online for “Omron RS1 manual”.



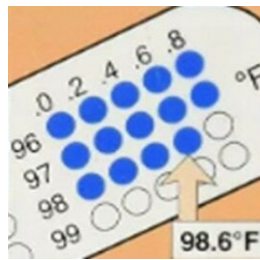
Using your temperature probe



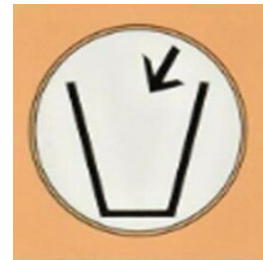
1. Remove thermometer from wrapper.



2. Place under tongue as far back as possible. Close your mouth for 60 seconds.



3. Remove. Wait approximately 10 seconds. Some blue dots may disappear as device “locks in” for accuracy. Read temperature indicated by last blue dot.



4. Record temperature and discard thermometer.

Recording your oxygen levels, heart rate, temperature, and blood pressure

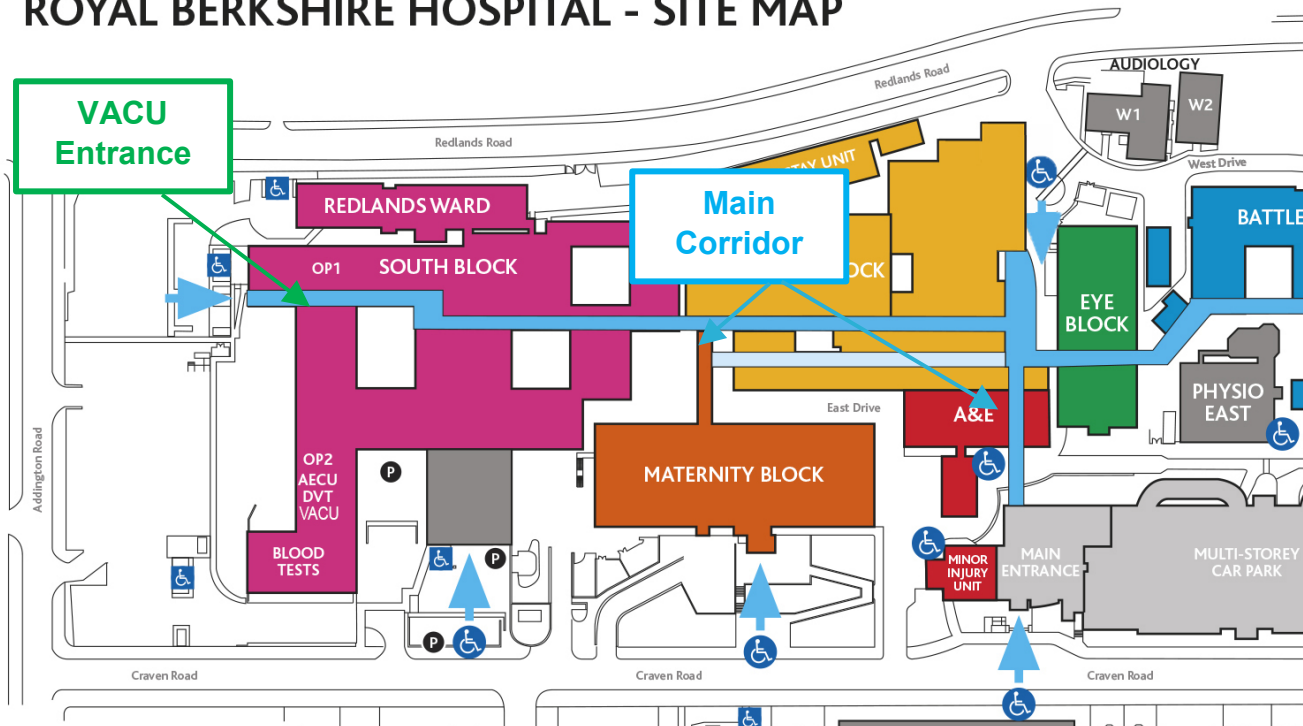
Using the table below, record your oxygen levels, heart rate, blood pressure and temperature four times a day:

DATE								
Morning	Oxygen							
	Heart rate							
	Blood pressure							
	Temperature							
Midday	Oxygen							
	Heart rate							
	Blood pressure							
	Temperature							
Afternoon	Oxygen							
	Heart rate							
	Blood pressure							
	Temperature							
Evening	Oxygen							
	Heart rate							
	Blood pressure							
	Temperature							

Returning the devices

Once you have recovered, please return all the devices to the drop-off box located in the Virtual Acute Care Unit (VACU) in South Block, level 2 in Outpatients 2 – see map below. Open Mon-Sun, 8am-8pm. **Please do not return them to the Emergency Department (A&E).**

ROYAL BERKSHIRE HOSPITAL - SITE MAP



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

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

RBFT Virtual Acute Care Unit

Reviewed: June 2024. Next review due: June 2026.