



## Covid-19 Virtual Acute Care Unit

This leaflet is for patients who are 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.

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

**Out of hours: 111 or 999**



### What is the Covid-19 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. 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.

### What will happen after I go home?

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

- Check your symptoms and ask you to give us a reading from your pulse oximeter at rest and after 40 brisk steps
- This may consist of a call a day or two after your discharge from hospital but may be more if we need to monitor you further.
- If you have had any blood tests, they will update you with the results.
- 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.

### 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 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**

### If you are pregnant...

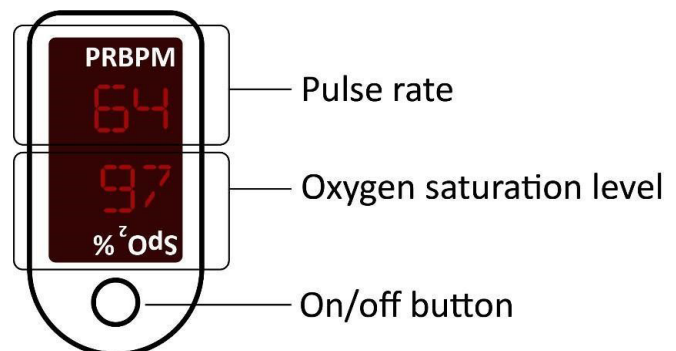
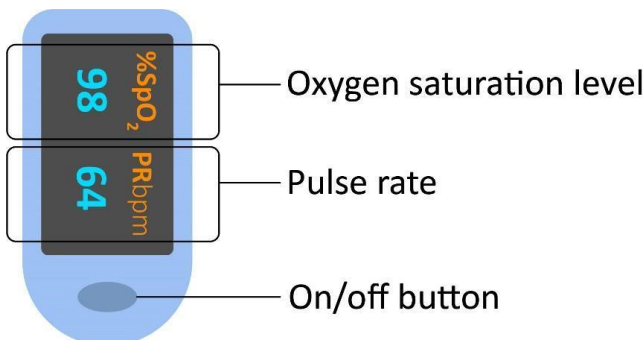
In addition to the previous alarm signs, if there are any concerns about the following, call maternity triage on 0118 322 7304:

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



### 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.
- After 5–10 seconds, the probe will give you two different numbers – an oxygen saturation level (abbreviated to SpO<sub>2</sub>) and a pulse rate (abbreviated to PR or BPM) – we are interested in both readings.



### Recording your oxygen levels

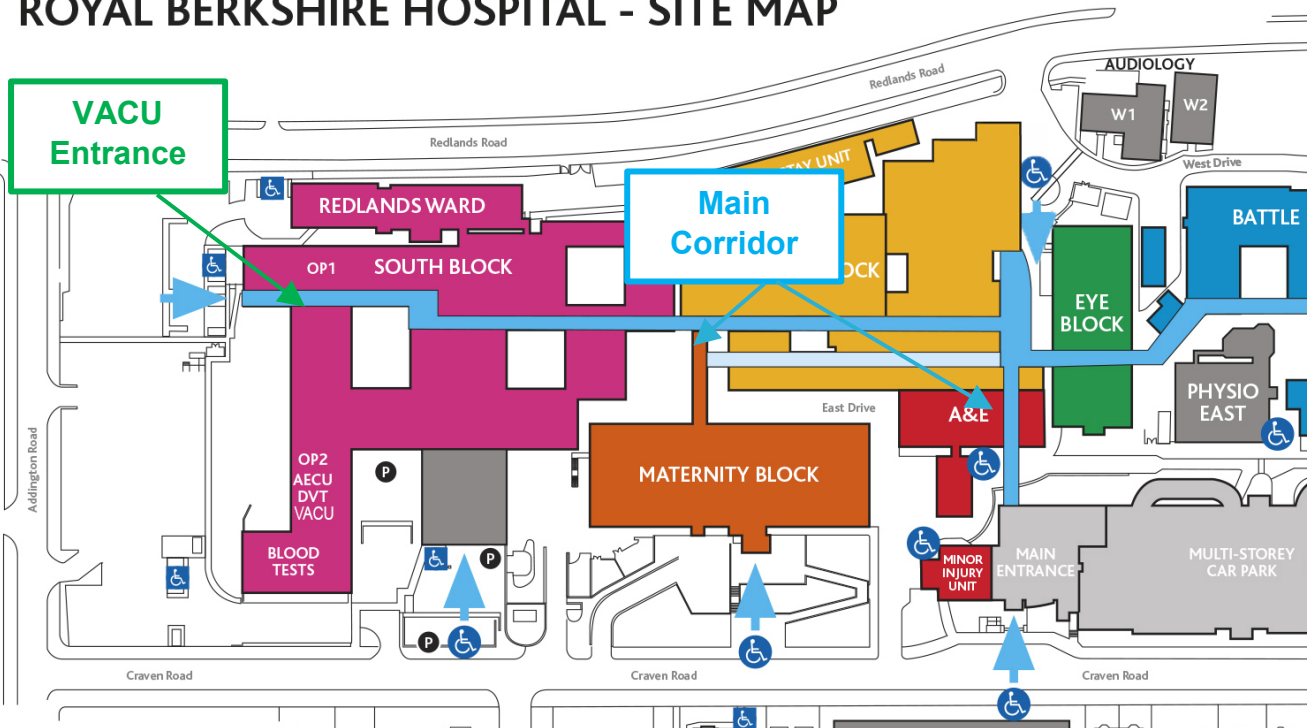
Using this table, record your oxygen saturations level (SpO2) and your pulse rate (PR or BPM) four times a day, while resting and then after taking 40 brisk steps:

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	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/

### Returning the pulse oximeter

Once you have recovered, please return the pulse oximeter 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](http://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.