

# Overnight Pulse Oximetry

**This leaflet explains more about overnight pulse oximetry, including the benefits, risks and any alternatives and what you can expect when you come to hospital.**

**If you have any further questions, please speak to a clinician caring for you.**

## What is overnight pulse oximetry?

This is an overnight test to monitor your breathing while you are asleep. The device is worn like a wrist watch and it records your blood oxygen saturation levels and your pulse rate. You will need to wear the device when you sleep for one night.

## Why should I have overnight pulse oximetry?

You have been referred to the sleep clinic and this is the initial test to try to find a cause for your symptoms. Having the test will allow the clinical team to check if there is evidence of sleep apnoea. If you are positive for sleep apnoea, treating it can help improve overall health, quality of life and general function in everyday activities.

## What are the risks?

There are no known risks to health from this test; however it may cause slight discomfort from wearing a soft probe on the end of your finger.

## Are there any alternatives?

The alternative test for assessing your breathing when you sleep includes polygraphy, this is a more in-depth test and consists of more monitoring straps to wear. Without a monitoring device to wear overnight, we will not be able to assess your breathing when you sleep.

## How can I prepare for overnight pulse oximetry?

You will need to ensure you are not wearing false nails, gels, nail polish or dyes as this will affect the reading of the test. You will also need to ensure you can return the device the following day to the same department from which you collected it.

## Asking for your consent

It is important that you feel involved in decisions about your care. For some treatments, you will be asked to sign a consent form to say that you agree to have the treatment and understand what it involves. You can withdraw your consent at any time, even if you have said 'yes' previously. If you would like more details about our consent process, please ask for a copy of our policy.

## **What happens during the overnight pulse oximetry?**

You will be given a timeframe for you to attend the hospital department. On arrival you will be asked to complete a short questionnaire and a loan agreement. The loan agreement states that the device is to be loaned to you and that you will return the device the following morning. Once these are completed we will provide you with the device in a box. You will need to take the device home and follow the instructions that are in written and video format:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lguz0bh9bvo&feature=youtu.be>

The written instructions and the video link will be provided in the box with the device. It is important that you use the device that night following the instructions and return it the next morning.

## **Will I feel any pain?**

There should be no pain associated with this test.

## **What happens after overnight pulse oximetry?**

Once the device is returned to the department, the device is downloaded and the results are analysed. A report is generated and uploaded to your electronic patient record. This will be reviewed by the sleep team and you will either be sent a letter with the results or a face-to-face appointment.

## **What do I need to do after I go home?**

There is nothing specific you will need to do as long as you are happy with how to use the device by following the instructions (written and video). Please undertake your normal routine.

## **Will I have a follow-up appointment?**

You will be given one of the following follow up appointments:

- A letter explaining the results and outcome, this will also be sent to your GP and referrer (if not your GP)
- A face-to-face appointment in the Chest Clinic.

This appointment will be arranged at the same time as your overnight pulse oximetry appointment and will be sent in the post. Please note the two appointments are likely to be posted in separate letters.

## **Useful sources of information**

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/sleep-apnoea/>

<https://www.blf.org.uk/support-for-you/obstructive-sleep-apnoea-osa/diagnosis>

## Contact us

If you have any questions or concerns about overnight pulse oximetry, please contact the Respiratory Physiology team on 020 8725 1667 (Monday to Friday, 8.30am to 5pm). Please leave a message if your call is not answered.

For more information leaflets on conditions, procedures, treatments and services offered at our hospitals, please visit [www.stgeorges.nhs.uk](http://www.stgeorges.nhs.uk)

## Additional services

### Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

PALS can offer you on-the-spot advice and information when you have comments or concerns about our services or the care you have received. You can visit the PALS office between 9.30am and 4.30pm, Monday to Friday in the main corridor between Grosvenor and Lanesborough wings (near the lift foyer).

**Tel:** 020 8725 2453 **Email:** [pals@stgeorges.nhs.uk](mailto:pals@stgeorges.nhs.uk)

### NHS Choices

NHS Choices provides online information and guidance on all aspects of health and healthcare, to help you make decisions about your health.

**Web:** [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)

### NHS 111

You can call 111 when you need medical help fast but it's not a 999 emergency.

NHS 111 is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Calls are free from landlines and mobile phones.

**Tel:** 111

### AccessAble

You can download accessibility guides for all of our services by searching 'St George's Hospital' on the AccessAble website ([www.accessable.co.uk](http://www.accessable.co.uk)).

The guides are designed to ensure everyone – including those with accessibility needs – can access our hospital and community sites with confidence.



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