

## Patient Instructions for Home Pulse Oximetry due to COVID Pneumonia

### Overview and Terminology

A *pulse oximeter* is a small device that clips on a finger and measures *oxygen saturation* levels. It works by passing beams of light through the blood in the finger and measuring changes of light absorption in oxygen-rich and oxygen-poor blood, which indicates the amount of oxygen.

Because you have COVID pneumonia, you are receiving a pulse oximeter for home monitoring of your oxygen saturation so that, in case you get worse, we can have an early indication of the need for admission for supplemental oxygen.

An oxygen saturation level of 94% or higher is expected in healthy individuals. An oxygen saturation level below 94% indicates hypoxemia (low blood oxygen). An oxygen saturation level below 90% indicates hypoxia and the need for supplemental oxygen.

### Measurement

- Accurate measurement is important. Remove any fingernail polish and be sure your fingers are warm. Turn on the device, clip it to your finger, and keep your finger still.
- Check your oxygen saturation every 8 hours or so.
- Measure over 5 minutes and record the **highest** reading. The highest reading is the one considered most accurate as the others will be considered falsely low.

### Acting on Results

- If your oxygen saturation at rest drops below 90%, return to the ER. Have someone accompany you and, of course, do not drive yourself. If you are unable to speak in sentences or walk a short distance, call 911.
- If your oxygen saturation at rest is 90% or higher, but feel extremely short of breath (unable to speak in sentences or walk a short distance), have someone take you to the ER.
- If you have questions or are not sure whether to return to the ER, notify your primary care provider, or call the ER Case Manager at (555) 555-5555.

### Electronic Follow-up

- You may receive a text message survey from the ER case manager to periodically check-in and see how you are doing. Please be prepared to share your most recent pulse oximetry and heart rate readings.

## Device Return

- Please return your device if you are hospitalized or have recovered at home.
- Recovery is defined as having no fever, chest pain, or shortness of breath for three days. The cough after any type of pneumonia can persist for weeks, and so is not an indicator of recovery.
- You may return the device by placing it in a plastic bag and bringing it to the ER triage nurse.