

Frequently Asked Questions

Pulse Oximeter Distribution in Testing Centres and Public Health Mobile Units

In June 2022, COVID testing centres (IWK/NSH/PHMU) began distributing pulse oximeters for self-management. The FAQ below is to help guide testing centre staff with the distribution.

- At the COVID testing centre, the client completes [Report and Support](#).
- Using the eligibility below, a decision is made for distribution or not.
- If a pulse oximeter is distributed, it is noted on the [Report and Support paper copy](#) and then entered on the online tracking sheet as per site processes.
- If no distribution is needed, no additional information is documented.

DISTRIBUTION & ELIGIBILITY

Who is eligible for a pulse oximeter (SPO2)?

Pulse Oximeters are provided to Nova Scotians free of charge to support self-management of symptoms at home for COVID positive people.

The criteria for distribution are:

Over the Age of 65 (Any 1 of the items)	Under the Age of 65** (Any 2 of the Items)
Symptomatic	Symptomatic
N/A	Pregnant Individuals
Any of the Comorbidities listed on the Report and Support Form	Two (2) of the Comorbidities listed on the Report and Support Form
<i>Any Referral from Therapeutics- Therapeutics does their own distribution</i>	
NOT TO BE GIVEN OUT TO PRE-OP PATIENTS	

What settings distribute the pulse oximeters?

- Covid-19 Testing Centers (NS Health and IWK Health)
- Public Health Mobile Unit
- Select Emergency Departments

What is given to clients with the pulse oximeter?

A client handout [Monitoring your COVID-19 symptoms at home using a pulse oximeter](#) is provided on how to use it and information on where to return the device when the client has recovered.

Do I need to demonstrate how to use the pulse oximeter?

A demonstration is not required. Encourage the client to review the handout and call 811 for questions.

What roles can distribute the pulse oximeter?

Any role in the COVID testing clinic/PHMU can distribute if the client meets the eligibility criteria. If you are not sure, check with the clinic or site lead.

What happens if someone wants one and is not symptomatic or does not meet the eligibility criteria?

If the client insists on getting a monitor and there is adequate stock, we can provide one. We should be using the eligibility criteria as our main benchmark for giving out monitors. If you are unsure check with the clinic or site lead.

Can anyone use it? All ages?

It can be used with all ages if the sensors line-up on the correct finger placement.

Can I provide more than one per family?

Only one pulse oximeter is to be provided per family. Review the client handout and encourage cleaning between family members.

Do we need to calculate BMI?

No, height and weight are collected on Report and Support for therapeutic purposes.

TRACKING & RETURNS

How do we track the distribution?

Distribution is tracked when the SpO2 meters go out and when they are returned on an online SPO2 Tracking Spreadsheet, where each distribution is recorded. Access to the SpO2 Tracking Spreadsheet can be requested through COVID Services via the COVID Zone/IWK or PH Testing Director.

- The spreadsheet includes: BME number, client name, and contact information
- Address information is not required

What do we distribute with the pulse oximeter for return instructions when the client is recovered?

- Return to your local COVID Testing Centre (NSH/IWK), Public Health Mobile Unit, or public library (except in Cumberland County)
- If you are unable to drop it off, ask a family or friend to drop it off for you.
- Returning the pulse oximeter when you're finished with it makes the resource available for other Nova Scotians.

What is the cleaning protocol and preparation when someone returns a pulse oximeter?

- Clean and disinfect with a hospital grade wipe. Wash hands, don gloves, use one wipe to clean, let dry. Once dry, use a second wipe to disinfect. Place the clean pulse oximeter in a clean container, remove gloves and wash hands.
- Check batteries (AAA) with each return to make sure they do not need to be replaced. Do not wipe down the batteries.

How do we follow up with people who don't return the monitor?

Admin roles (clerks/secretaries) or ESAs (depending on setting) will do one follow up phone call every four weeks after SpO2 monitor is borrowed.

What happens if one breaks?

Record on the spreadsheet that it was removed from service and let the manager know so that it can be replaced. Broken meters can be discarded in regular waste.

Can we mail them?

Preferably, no. If there is no other way to have the SpO2 returned, then we would look at using a courier (cost of courier vs cost of monitor needs to be reviewed prior to sending out the courier).

SUPPLY & INVENTORY

What happens if our testing site runs out of pulse oximeters?

Inventory should be reviewed on a regular basis. The list of monitors out in the community needs to be reviewed regularly and clients are called to return them. If you run out, please check with one of the other CTCs or PHMU to see if they can share.

How do we order more pulse oximeters for our Zone/Clinic?

- **Central Zone:**
 - Send an email to joel.misson@nshealth.ca with your clinic, the number of requested monitors and when you need them by. If you need them on the same day, you can call 902-456-7327 Monday-Friday and Joel will either courier them or deliver them to your site. Ensure you provide your full address for delivery.
- **All Other Zones and PHMU:**
 - Send an email to joel.misson@nshealth.ca ***48 to 72 hours in advance*** with your zone/clinic name, mailing address, phone number and number of requested monitoring devices. They will be overnight couriered from Central Zone. Try to place orders on a weekday as couriers tend to be slower and not do as many runs on weekends.

For additional information, reach out to your COVID Zone/IWK/PH Testing Director or COVID Testing Centre leads.