Pulse Oximetry Monitoring for COPD

by AMY MANLEY

Are Pulse Oximetry Monitors for Me?

With advancements to pulse oximetry monitoring you can now have one of these devices at home for your personal use, rather than just using them at the hospital. They are a great tool for chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) patients to use for monitoring respiratory health. You may be wondering if the device will work for you; by learning more about what this device has to offer, you can determine if buying your own monitor would be a good choice.

What Is Pulse Oximetry Monitoring?

This device is small in size and generally made from plastic material. It comfortably clamps onto your fingertip where it takes its readings, and the results are displayed on an easy-to-read window on the front of the device within seconds. It measures both your pulse and oxygen-saturation levels.

They are battery powered, small, simple to use, and easy to transport from one location to another. Additionally, there are no needles involved, so you can get a reading without breaking your skin.

Do You Need A Monitor?

Your oxygen saturation level is the amount of oxygen present in the blood that leads to your arteries. A healthy individual without any respiratory issues has a saturation level between 95 and 100. Those with COPD have higher levels, but if they fall out of a certain range, medical attention is vital. A good level for those with COPD is around 90 percent.

You may benefit from a pulse monitoring device, especially if you are using oxygen as part of your COPD plan. By monitoring your oxygen levels, you can determine when you need to use your oxygen, and also if your oxygen treatment is proving effective for you.

What Is the Cost?

These devices were very expensive when they were first released for home use and many people with COPD were unable to afford them. However, since that time, the price has dropped significantly and they can be found for as low as $30. The devices are affordable for most people, and some insurance plans will now cover part or all the cost for your monitoring device.

Considerations

While this device can be very effective, there are certain circumstances that can affect the reading you get.

In order to get a correct reading from your device, always be sure to examine the following:

- Poor circulation to the fingertips
- Having cold hands after being outdoors
- Wearing blue, black or green nail polish
- Certain medical conditions, such as heart disease

In the case of poor circulation, rubbing your hands together for a few minutes will warm up your blood and get your circulation running smoothly. You should also consider leaving one finger without nail polish for your readings, or removing it prior. Certain medical conditions, such as heart disease, can alter the reading. It’s important that you discuss any concerns and past or current medical conditions with your doctor to ensure your pulse monitor reading is accurate at all times.

This handy tool can help you keep your levels stable. By working closely with your doctor, you can use your handheld tool to determine if your treatment is working properly. You can even document your readings and bring them to your next appointment to give your doctor a good look at your current treatment status, and any changes you may need to implement into your plan.