

Checklist: Using a Pulse Oximeter

Using a Pulse Oximeter	Able to Perform	Unable to Perform
1. Perform hand hygiene and identify the patient according to facility policy.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Explain the procedure and provide privacy as appropriate.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Assemble equipment: – Pulse oximeter unit – Sensor appropriate to the site – Tape, if needed, to secure the sensor	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Select and apply the sensor. Clean reusable sensors and equipment according to manufacturer instructions and facility policy. If the sensor has position markings, align them opposite to each other to ensure an accurate reading. Ensure the site is clean, warm, and free of excessive motion or nail polish/artificial nails if using a finger sensor. Assess the sensor site for redness, irritation, or impaired circulation and rotate sites as needed according to facility policy.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Fasten the sensor securely, or the reading will not be accurate. Make sure the sensor is not wrapped so tightly with tape that it restricts blood flow.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Attach the sensor to the patient cable on the pulse oximeter.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. Turn the unit on. If the audio is turned on, you will hear a beep with each pulse beat. Adjust the volume as desired. Some units also use light bars to indicate the strength of the pulse. Note the percentage of oxygen saturation. Inform the nurse and document according to facility policy.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. Monitor the patient's pulse rate. Compare with the patient's actual pulse to make sure the unit is picking up each beat. Inform the nurse and document according to facility policy.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. Monitor the patient's respirations and general appearance. Inform the nurse and document according to facility policy. If the patient's general condition changes at any time, notify the nurse.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10. Report abnormal oxygen saturation levels or changes in respiratory status immediately according to facility policy.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11. Perform hand hygiene after completing care.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>