A close-up photograph of a newborn baby's foot. A white, circular saturation probe is attached to the foot, with a red light visible on the sole. The baby is lying on a blue surface.

# How to place a Saturation Probe on the Neonatal Unit & Transitional Care

## Parent Information



This information leaflet was designed and produced by the East Midlands Neonatal Operational Delivery Network.

For further information on what we do, please visit our website; [www.emnodn.nhs.uk](http://www.emnodn.nhs.uk)

## What is saturation monitoring?

This is a method of monitoring how much oxygen is circulating in your baby's blood. This is important so that the nursing and medical staff caring for your baby can understand what your baby's oxygen levels are, so that they can increase or decrease the amount of oxygen that is given to your baby if required.

## How is the oxygen level monitored?

A probe is placed on your baby's foot, palm or wrist and secured using a foam wrap. The probe is connected to the monitor at the cot side and will then record how much oxygen is circulating in your baby's body.

## Equipment

Ensure that the nurse helping you to care for your baby has shown you how to attach a saturation probe so you know what to do. It is also important that you know how often your baby needs to have his/her probe position changed; this is usually every 3-4 hours.

Your baby will have a small probe and a wrap to secure the probe with.

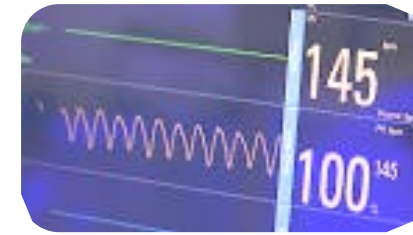
## How to change a saturation probe

Before placing the probe, ensure that your baby's skin is clean and dry.

When placing the probe on your baby both sides of the sensor should be placed directly opposite each other ensuring there is no gap between it and the skin.

The foam wrap if used should be used to gently secure the probe in place. Ensure it is not too tight.

Once the probe is in position give it a moment to pick up a good reading. If your baby is moving it can sometimes affect the accuracy of the reading. Look at the trace on the monitor, you want to see clear peaks (like the top of Christmas trees).



If you are in anyway unsure, please ask the nurse helping you to care for your baby to check.

The probe site position will need to be changed at least every 3-4 hours. This is to ensure that your baby's skin does not become irritated or sore. When moving the probe always check your baby's skin at the site where the probe was removed.

If the probe is not picking up clearly or has become dirty, please ask the nurse helping you to care for your baby who will check the site and probe and replace it if necessary.

## Other things to remember

A saturation monitor is important for the nursing and medical staff to monitor the amount of oxygen your baby has circulating in his/her body. However it is important for you to get used to looking at your baby's colour and to note any changes. It is very easy to pay attention to the monitoring equipment and not to look at any changes in your baby. All monitors will be removed before you take your baby home\* and it is very important to get used to other ways of noticing any changes in your baby's condition.

\* very occasionally babies may be sent home with a monitor under the care of the neonatal outreach team.