

## What should I do if I need help when I am lying on my front?

The important thing is to stay calm. Continue to take deep breaths. If you are able to turn back onto your back carefully then please do so, ensuring you do not get tangled in the oxygen cabling.

If you are unable to turn onto your back on your own press your nurse call buzzer. Please remember that the nurses will take a few minutes to put on their PPE before they can come to you so do not panic if they do not arrive immediately.

## Patient information

# Coronavirus (COVID-19) How lying on your front can help get more oxygen into your body

## What is COVID-19?

COVID-19 is a disease caused by a new virus, first seen in Wuhan China. Since its discovery it has rapidly spread to many countries across the globe which has resulted in the WHO declaring that there is a virus pandemic. The symptoms can be mild and similar to the flu or they can be severe, resulting in admission to hospital and sometimes to intensive care.

## How does it affect the lungs?

The virus itself can attack the lungs causing direct damage. However, the body's immune response to the virus can also cause damage to the lungs. This can mean that patients are not able to get enough oxygen into their bodies. Oxygen is vital for all body functions and if you don't have enough it can result in many things including confusion, chest pain, seizures and death.

## Patient information

### How can lying on my front (prone positioning) help?

Many patients who come to hospital need oxygen therapy via nasal tubes or face masks, or in severe cases a ventilator. In many countries, medical teams have found that laying patients on their front whilst giving them oxygen helps improve the amount of oxygen that gets into the body. This is because laying on your front stops your heart and stomach from pressing down on your lungs and allows the air sacks within the lungs to fully inflate. This can mean patients require less oxygen overall and, in some cases, can delay or prevent the need for intubation and ventilation.

### How do I do it?

A member of staff will help you get into one of the positions below. It is important to make sure you feel comfortable as you will be lying in this position for a few hours, so please familiarise yourself with all the positions. When you are ready you will need to:

- Turn over and lay on your front, placing pillows under your head, torso, knees or feet as required (see images)
- Ensure your head is comfortable and that your oxygen is attached properly. If you are wearing a non-rebreathe bag with a mask you must ensure the bag is inflated
- Lay on your front for as long as you can, changing position every 1-2 hours for comfort
- A nurse will come round to regularly monitor your oxygen saturations and make sure the oxygen is still in the correct place.



#### Position 1: Full prone

Lay on your front with your head turned to one side and both arms tucked under chest/shoulders. Consider additional pillow under shins to offload hamstrings and pressure on the toes.

#### Position 2: Full prone

Lay on your front with your head turned to one side and both arms out and up next to your head. Place an additional pillow under your abdomen.



#### Position 3: Full prone

Lay on your front with your head turned to one side and the leg on the same side out at 90 degrees. Support this leg with a pillow. Place your arms wherever is comfortable.

#### Position 4: Side lie with partial prone

Lay on your side as much as possible with a pillow under your trunk and another under your knees for support.

