Health Navigator New Zealand

Aotearoa e te toa!   
A series of resources for people with COVID in the community

# Transcript: How to assess your breathing rate

## [Introduction]

| **Audio** | **Visual** |
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| [Guitar music] | Aotearoa e te toa!  How to assess your breathing rate |
| [Guitar music]  [Narrator] People with COVID may experience an abnormal breathing rate, where breathing may get faster or slower.    If you have new or worse trouble breathing and have concerns, you should call 111 and tell them you have COVID. | A woman stands in the garden, watering flowers. |
| [Guitar music]  [Woman] But what's a normal breathing rate? How do I know if it's not right?  [Narrator] Good question Alice, let's look at some ways to measure your breathing rate. | The woman stands in the garden, holding the watering can. |

## [Ways to measure your breathing rate]

| **Audio** | **Visual** |
| --- | --- |
| [Guitar music]  [Narrator] Breathing rate is best measured when you're relaxing, chilling out, or at least having spent a few minutes resting. You just have to count the number of times your chest rises in a minute.  When checking your breathing, is it hard to get air in? or does it hurt?  For adults, breathing rate will usually be between 12 and 20 breaths per minute.  For children the breathing rate varies with age. | A man in a dressing gown sits on his bed. He looks at his watch (on his right hand) while holding his left hand on his chest, counting breaths.  The man uses a notepad or tablet device to record his breathing rate.  A blue background appears, and a hand holding a pen writes out this note:  Normal adult breathing rate is 12 to 20 breaths per minute. |
| [Guitar music]  [Narrator] Write down the number of breaths per minute in your symptom diary, which you can find on the Health Navigator website. | A tabletop is shown, and a hand above the table holds a printed COVID-19 symptom diary. |
| [Guitar music]  [Narrator] If your breathing rate is slower or faster than this, ask someone else to check it for you.  They will need to make sure you are rested and not aware they are counting. Feeling anxious or focusing on your breathing can change it. | The man sits on a chair in the lounge. The woman sits across the room in a chair, holding a notebook. She quietly counts and writes down the man’s breathing rate.  The man and woman are both wearing face masks. |

## [Tips to improve your breathing rate]

| **Audio** | **Visual** |
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| [Guitar music]  [Narrator] You can try these breathing tips to improve your breathing rate. | The woman stands in the garden. |
| [Guitar music]  [Woman] I like doing controlled breathing, like this:  [Narrator]   * Sit in a comfortable position. * Put one hand on your chest and the other on your stomach. * Slowly breathe in through your nose, or mouth if you're unable to do this, and then out through your mouth. You'll feel the hand on your stomach rise more than the hand on your chest. * Try to use as little effort as possible and make your breath slow, relaxed and smooth. | The woman sits in a chair in the garden and places one hand on her chest and the other on her stomach.  She slowly breathes in through her nose and out through her mouth a few times. |
| [Guitar music]  [Man] You can also try pursed lip breathing:   * Take a deep breath in through your nose for about two seconds. * Purse your lips like you're going to whistle. * Breathe out slowly through your mouth for four seconds if you can. | The man in the dressing gown sits in the lounge.  He takes a deep breath in through his nose, purses his lips like he’s going to whistle, and breathes out slowly through his mouth for a few seconds. |
| [Guitar music]  [Man] If you're having a bit of trouble getting air, look at our video on positions to make your breathing easier. | The man stands in the lounge. On the bottom of the video screen, a web address is shown:  [healthnavigator.org.nz/breathing-positions](https://www.healthnavigator.org.nz/breathing-positions/) |

## [Key messages]

| **Audio** | **Visual** |
| --- | --- |
| [Guitar music]  [Narrator] You can do this! Remember, if you have new or worse trouble breathing and have concerns call 111. | A notecard or notepad is shown with the heading “Things to know and try”.  The messages are listed:   1. Your breathing may get faster when you have COVID-19. 2. You can learn how to measure it or get help to measure it. 3. Try breathing techniques to ease your breathing. 4. Call 111 for help if you are concerned and tell them you have COVID. 5. Normal adult breathing rate is 12 to 20 breaths per minute. |
| [Guitar music] | Credits are shown:   * Health Navigator New Zealand * Te Poari Hauora Ā Rohe O Te Tai Tokerau/Northland District Health Board * Ministry of Health/Manatū Hauora   A website URL is shown:  [hn.org.nz/breathing-positions](https://www.healthnavigator.org.nz/breathing-positions/)  In partnership with Northland DHB and the Ministry of Health |