



### How accurate is the pulse oximeter?

- A pulse oximeter may also be less accurate with very low oxygen saturation levels (**below 80%**) or with very dark skin.
  - False high readings are also always obtained from smokers - readings are affected for up to four hours after smoking a cigarette (Dobson, 1993).
  - Most oximeters give a reading 2% over or 2% under what your saturation would be if obtained by an arterial blood gas. For example, if your oxygen saturation reads 92% on the pulse oximeter, it may be actually anywhere from 90 to 94%.
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- <https://www.thoracic.org/patients/patient-resources/resources/pulse-oximetry.pdf>
  - [Pulse Oximetry | Measuring Oxygen Status | Nursing Times](#)
  - [Pulse oximetry \(nih.gov\)](#)