

# Ambulatory oxygen

Respiratory

The prevention of infection is a major priority in all healthcare and everyone has a part to play.

- Please decontaminate your hands frequently for 20 seconds using soap and water or alcohol gel if available
- If you have symptoms of diarrhoea and/or vomiting, cough or other respiratory symptoms, a temperature or any loss of taste or smell please do not visit the hospital or any other care facility and seek advice from 111
- Keep the environment clean and tidy
- Let's work together to keep infections out of our hospitals and care homes.

The aim of this leaflet is to help you understand when ambulatory oxygen is appropriate, how you are assessed and how to use it.

## What is ambulatory oxygen?

Ambulatory oxygen is a portable treatment to be used when mobilising and carrying out physical activity. This oxygen is supplied in cylinders which can either be carried in the back pack supplied, wheeled on a trolley or when using a rollator. Ambulatory oxygen will always be prescribed in a cylinder unless the HOS-AR team feel it is appropriate to use alternative equipment, this is usually for patients who need a higher oxygen flow rate. You will be attached to the cylinder via a nasal cannulae. There are two prongs to fit up each nostril and the tube then hooks over the ears and fastened under the chin.

## What does ambulatory oxygen do?

Ambulatory oxygen supplies the body with additional oxygen when your body is working at its hardest, when you are mobilising. It is important that this oxygen is therefore only used when moving around. When moving, the muscles require more oxygen and in many lung conditions oxygen delivery to the muscles may be impaired. This oxygen should not be used when sitting or to help recover after mobilising. Some people may require less oxygen when sitting or none at all as the body does not need as much oxygen at rest. It is important oxygen is used as prescribed and it should be treated as any other prescribed medication.

## How will I know if I need it?

You may be referred by your consultant to the Home Oxygen Service for Assessment and Review or HOS-AR for short. The HOS-AR team are based at New Cross Hospital within the Respiratory Centre. Here a formal assessment will be made, we will get you to walk up and down a corridor for 6 minutes between two cones that are 15 metres apart and monitor your oxygen levels whilst doing so. It is essential you walk at a normal pace for yourself, there will be chairs along the corridor so that you can rest if needed. The test may be repeated if the results indicate oxygen would be beneficial to you and can also be repeated a few times to ensure the correct level of oxygen is used. You will be given plenty of rest between each test.

## When should I use ambulatory oxygen?

Ambulatory oxygen should only be used when mobilising. This oxygen should not be used when sitting still or to help recover. It is to help you continue with your activities outside of your the home.

## What if I have a chest infection?

It is important that we assess your oxygen levels when you do not have a chest infection. If you have a chest infection please contact the HOS-AR team so your appointment can be re-arranged. The assessment will be moved to a date where you will be at least 6 weeks clear of a chest infection.

## How long will portable oxygen last?

The length of time ambulatory oxygen lasts for is dependant on the flow rate of oxygen and equipment prescribed. The HOS-AR team will determine the flow rate and equipment needed.

Devices called conservers can be added to ambulatory cylinders to help them last longer. Not all patients are suitable for conservers and again this will be assessed by the HOS-AR team.

For a guide to how long ambulatory cylinders last with and without a conserver device, please refer to the Baywater leaflet (page 7).

## How will I know what equipment I need?

The HOS-AR team will organise the equipment needed and with your permission your details will be passed on to the oxygen provider which is a company called Baywater Healthcare. This is a private company working with the NHS in the West Midlands and Staffordshire to supply oxygen therapy. They will be in touch to arrange a convenient date and time to supply and install the equipment. Not all equipment is suitable for every individual so it is important that this decision is left with the HOS-AR team.

## What happens when I run out of oxygen?

When oxygen is first delivered Baywater Healthcare will leave you with contact numbers. When you are near to needing new cylinders please call Baywater to arrange delivery of new cylinders. If you are having to contact Baywater more than once a month for a delivery of ambulatory cylinders please contact the HOS-AR team. If you have not contacted Baywater for more than 3 months for a delivery please also contact the HOS-AR team—this will help us to accurately determine the amount of cylinders needed in the home.

## How will I be followed up?

If ambulatory oxygen is prescribed, you will be seen on a regular basis to review how you are getting on with ambulatory oxygen and to determine the correct oxygen flow rate and that the equipment is still being used appropriately.

## Are there any risks when using oxygen?

Oxygen is highly flammable so it should not be used near any naked flames or heat sources. You should never smoke whilst using oxygen and no one in the household should smoke near the oxygen source, even if it is not being used! Smoking in the home with oxygen therapy could cause yourself and others significant harm. It should also be remembered that oxygen will stay on your clothes and the area in which it is used at a high concentration for some time after use. E-cigarettes can also pose a risk when using oxygen and should not be used or charged around the oxygen supply.

The oxygen will be positioned in a safe place, it should not be placed by any heat source. Oxygen should not be used around gas cookers, open fires or any naked flames. When you are not using the oxygen it is important to switch it off. Also be aware that oxygen tubing is a trip hazard so always take care around it.

To ensure that you are safe to use oxygen at home a risk assessment will be completed. The risk assessment asks a number of questions regarding how safe it is for you to have oxygen at home. Typically questions related to smoking, smoke alarms at your property, safe storage of oxygen and if you have recently had a fall etc. If you are at risk with using oxygen it may not be prescribed to you. West Midlands Fire Service provides safety checks and assess smoke alarms in your property, it is recommended that all patients take up this service. The HOS-AR team can arrange this for you.

## Are there any side effects?

The area in which the nasal cannula sits may also become dry, this can be treated with water based lubricants. Do not use petroleum based products such as Vaseline as they are not suitable to use with oxygen.

## What are the benefits?

Oxygen therapy can improve quality of life and life expectancy. It will take the strain off your heart and lungs caused by low oxygen reducing the risk of developing the complications associated with this.

## What if I don't want oxygen therapy?

It is your decision whether you would like oxygen. If you do not wish to have it at present, we will continue to monitor you. Oxygen is a therapy to improve quality of life and not to be a burden.





## English

If you need information in another way like easy read or a different language please let us know.

If you need an interpreter or assistance please let us know.

## Lithuanian

Jeigu norėtumėte, kad informacija jums būtų pateikta kitu būdu, pavyzdžiui, supaprastinta forma ar kita kalba, prašome mums apie tai pranešti.

Jeigu jums reikia vertėjo ar kitos pagalbos, prašome mums apie tai pranešti.

## Polish

Jeżeli chcieliby Państwo otrzymać te informacje w innej postaci, na przykład w wersji łatwej do czytania lub w innym języku, prosimy powiedzieć nam o tym.

Prosimy poinformować nas również, jeżeli potrzebowałiby Państwo usługi tłumaczenia ustnego lub innej pomocy.

## Punjabi

ਜੇ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਇਹ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਰੂਪ ਵਿਚ, ਜਿਵੇਂ ਪੜ੍ਹਨ ਵਿਚ ਆਸਾਨ ਰੂਪ ਜਾਂ ਕਿਸੇ ਦੂਜੀ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਿਚ, ਚਾਹੀਦੀ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਦੱਸੋ।

ਜੇ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਦੁਭਾਸ਼ੀਏ ਦੀ ਜਾਂ ਸਹਾਇਤਾ ਦੀ ਲੋੜ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਦੱਸੋ।

## Romanian

Dacă aveți nevoie de informații în alt format, ca de exemplu caractere ușor de citit sau altă limbă, vă rugăm să ne informați.

Dacă aveți nevoie de un interpret sau de asistență, vă rugăm să ne informați.

## Traditional Chinese

如果您需要以其他方式了解信息，如易读或其他语种，请告诉我们。

如果您需要口译人员或帮助，请告诉我们。