

# Being treated with oxygen at home

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 why oxygen at home is appropriate, what happens in an oxygen assessment and useful information about living with oxygen.

## What is oxygen treatment?

Long-Term Oxygen Therapy (LTOT) is a treatment used for low blood oxygen level (hypoxaemia). Oxygen is needed to enable the organs of the body to work efficiently. Sometimes the lungs cannot get enough oxygen into the blood and this can put a strain on the heart and blood vessels. It is important to remember oxygen is not a treatment for shortness of breath!

## 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. The assessment will occur over two visits, three weeks apart. If your oxygen levels remain consistently low, supplementary oxygen may be beneficial. Alternatively, you may have been discharged from the ward with oxygen, if this is the case the ward will then refer you to the HOS-AR team. An assessment will be performed up to 6 weeks after being discharged from hospital. Palliative care patients will also need to undergo the same formal assessment.

## 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.

## What happens at an oxygen assessment?

A blood test will be taken either from the earlobe or from the wrist. This will allow the team to assess the level of oxygen in your blood.

If the blood test shows that your oxygen levels have returned to normal then oxygen treatment will no longer provide you with any additional benefit and should be removed.

If the blood test shows the oxygen level has not recovered then you will need to continue to use oxygen at home. The HOS-AR team will provide you with information and education about using oxygen, they may also change the oxygen equipment and the level of oxygen you were originally given. Oxygen is a medication and it is important that the right level of oxygen is determined. You must use your oxygen as prescribed and be monitored regularly so oxygen can be adjusted to your needs.

It is important that you attend the oxygen clinic to make sure you are receiving oxygen correctly. The appointment will take between 30 - 60 minutes to complete.

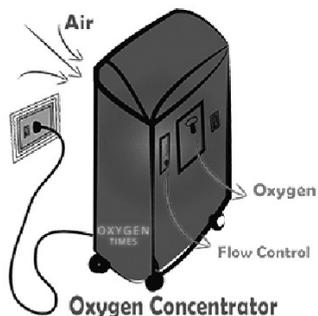
## How long will I have to use oxygen for?

In order to improve oxygen levels and reduce the strain on your heart and lungs it is beneficial to use oxygen for more than 15 hours per day. Many people use their oxygen overnight to help achieve the recommended hours. Portable oxygen may also be prescribed to you to help you carry out activities outside of the home, whilst helping you with oxygen usage.

## What equipment will I have at home?

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.

Oxygen is most commonly given by an oxygen concentrator - a box which plugs into the electricity. It takes oxygen from the air, filters and concentrates it. You will be attached to the concentrator via a nasal cannula. There are two prongs to fit up each nostril and the tube the hooks over the ears and fastened under the chin.



Oxygen may also be piped in around the home, making oxygen available to you in different rooms without having to move the concentrator. Oxygen tubing is fitted around the skirting boards to prevent you from tripping over loose tubing. If you would like this Baywater will carry out a survey and a risk assessment. A wall tap will be inserted in a suitable location so oxygen can be directed to the desired room.

## Will using oxygen affect my electricity bill?

Electricity used by the concentrator is reimbursed at the standard rate for the electricity provider. To do this a reading will be taken from the meter inside the oxygen concentrator, which shows how many hours it has been running. You should receive four payments per year which can either go direct into your bank account, sent by cheque or a direct payment to the electricity supplier.

## How do I leave the home if I have oxygen?

Portable oxygen can be prescribed to use oxygen outside of the home. These cylinders can either be carried by backpack or pulled by a trolley which can also be supplied to you. This allows you to carry on your daily activities. For more information please read our Ambulatory Oxygen leaflet.

## Can I go on holiday if I am on oxygen?

Arrangements can be made for oxygen to be supplied anywhere within the UK. A fit to fly assessment may be required for travel via aircraft.

It is also possible to arrange oxygen for most worldwide destinations but this may be at an additional cost, for further information please read the Travelling with Oxygen leaflet.

## 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 not 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 also pose a risk when using oxygen and should not be used or charged around the oxygen source.

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 the concentrator off. Also be aware that oxygen tubing is a trip hazard so always take care around this.

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.

A back-up cylinder will also be placed in a secure location to be used in the case of a power cut. Please do not move this.

## Are there any side effects?

Some patients may be classed as 'oxygen sensitive'. This means it is important to keep their oxygen at a certain level otherwise their waste gas (carbon dioxide) will also increase. The HOS-AR team will assess this and an alert pack maybe issued to you if you are deemed as 'oxygen sensitive'. 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 thus 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.

## Contact details

If you have any questions about your oxygen treatment or your appointment in the Oxygen clinic, please contact the Home Oxygen Service at New Cross Hospital, Wolverhampton on 01902 695061 (9.00am to 4.30pm, Monday to Friday).

# My oxygen prescription

Surname	NHS No
Forename	
Address	DOB
Postcode	(or affix patient label)

Date	Oxygen Equipment	Flow Rate

## 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 potrzebowaliby 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。