

## **Patient information factsheet**

### **Long term oxygen therapy at home**

You may have many questions regarding the use of oxygen and the information here is for guidance only. The oxygen company will provide you with information about your equipment. This information sheet should not be used to take the place of any medical diagnosis or prescription.

#### **Delivery**

Once you have had your oxygen assessment, the doctor or nurse will contact the company who supply the oxygen. They will deliver the oxygen within three working days or sooner if the doctor or nurse feels it is necessary. The oxygen company will contact you to arrange a convenient time to meet you at your home to deliver the oxygen.

#### **How long to use oxygen each day**

You will need to use the oxygen for a minimum of 16 hours per day.

You will also be supplied with small cylinders of oxygen so that you can continue to use it when you go out. This is called ambulatory oxygen. In most circumstances your ambulatory oxygen will be set at the same rate as your oxygen concentrator.

#### **Oxygen concentrators**

An oxygen concentrator is a machine that extracts oxygen from the air.

The machine uses electricity and needs to be plugged into the mains supply. The oxygen company will talk to you about the best place to put your concentrator, as it needs to be positioned safely in your home.

You will receive oxygen either through a nasal cannula or facemask.

The oxygen supplier will reimburse you the amount of electricity you use with the concentrator.

#### **Cleaning the oxygen concentrator**

The oxygen company will tell you how to care for your oxygen equipment. If you have a concentrator the filter must be rinsed every week. It must be left to air dry before you replace it.

The oxygen company will contact you to service the machine.

#### **Power cuts**

You will be supplied with a large cylinder of oxygen for use during any power failure. This needs to be placed somewhere safe and secure, where it will not fall over, as a crack in the cylinder can be very dangerous.

#### **Faults**

The oxygen supplier will give you a troubleshooting guide so that you can solve any simple problems yourself.

If you are not able to fix the problem yourself, contact the oxygen supplier straight away.

## **Liquid oxygen**

Sometimes we prescribe liquid oxygen. The oxygen supplier will assess to see if it is safe for you to have liquid oxygen, as it cannot be stored indoors.

## **Side effects of oxygen**

In some cases too much oxygen may lead to an increase in carbon dioxide levels in your blood stream, which can be dangerous. If you experience any of the following symptoms, contact your nurse or doctor or seek medical advice urgently:

- Confusion
- Drowsiness
- Daily early morning headaches

## **Safety precautions**

Oxygen needs to be used safely. Never smoke, or let anyone else smoke, near the oxygen. Stay away from naked flames, such as gas fires and stoves. Be careful with the oxygen tubing as this can be very long and a trip hazard. Always ensure that the oxygen is turned off when it is not in use.

Oxygen concentrators must be kept away from water heaters or other sources of heat or flames. Your oxygen supplier will supply you with safety guidelines.

## **Holidays**

If you are going on holiday, contact the department who assessed you for oxygen. They will need the holiday dates, a contact name and telephone number and the address where you are staying. If you are flying you also need to check with the airline that they will supply oxygen during your flight.

## **Follow up appointments**

You will be contacted to arrange respiratory/hospital assessments. These can range from six weeks to three, six or twelve months.

## **Contacts**

The respiratory centre  
D level, West Wing  
Southampton General Hospital  
Tremona Road  
Southampton SO16 6YD

Telephone: 023 8079 4325 or 023 8079 6258, Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm.

If you need to contact someone urgently outside these hours, call your GP out of hours service.

If you have a non-urgent enquiry you can email [trc@uhs.nhs.uk](mailto:trc@uhs.nhs.uk)

[www.uhs.nhs.uk/respiratorycentre](http://www.uhs.nhs.uk/respiratorycentre)

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