

Important advice for home oxygen therapy

Don't

- Smoke or vape when receiving oxygen therapy.
- Leave your oxygen running when not in use.
- Leave your nasal prongs on the bed or chair with the oxygen running, as there may be a build up of gas that could be dangerous.
- Allow others to smoke near the oxygen.
- Use flammable products, such as cleaning fluids, paint thinner, petroleum-based creams or aerosols, when you are on oxygen therapy.

Do

- Inform the local fire service that you have oxygen in the house.
- Inform your electricity supplier that you are using oxygen (if you have a concentrator). You will be put on a priority list for reconnection in the event of power failure.
- Inform your home insurance company. This should not affect your premium.
- Have a smoke alarm in your home.
- Keep oxygen cylinders upright, especially when travelling in a vehicle.

My oxygen prescription

Long term oxygen therapy:

Flow rate: l/min

To use between 15 and 24 hours per day.

Ambulatory oxygen therapy:

Flow rate: l/min

To use when I am walking around or exercising.

Contact the oxygen nurse specialists on:

Telephone: **023 8120 8119**
(Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm)

My oxygen supplier is:

Dolby Vivisol
Telephone: **0800 917 9840**

If you need a translation of this document, an interpreter or a version in large print, Braille or on audiotape, please call 023 8120 4688.

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Version 1. Published March 2019. Due for review March 2022. 2168

Home oxygen therapy

Information for patients,
families and carers



This leaflet will explain what home oxygen therapy is and outline the benefits and possible side effects of the treatment. If you have any further questions, please speak to a member of your healthcare team who will be pleased to help you.

What is home oxygen therapy?

Home oxygen therapy involves breathing in air that contains more oxygen than normal from a cylinder or machine in your home. This therapy is prescribed if you have a heart or lung condition that causes low oxygen levels in your blood.

How does oxygen work?

Oxygen is needed for all the organs of the body to function well. If the lungs cannot get enough oxygen into the bloodstream (for example, if you have lung disease) this puts a strain on the heart. By breathing in extra oxygen you can reduce this strain on both your lungs and heart. You can also improve your memory, alertness, sleep, mood and general wellbeing.

Will I become dependent on oxygen?

You will not become dependent or 'hooked' on oxygen and using more will not minimise its useful effects. When you are at home, awake or asleep you should use the oxygen as directed. However, there is no need to have oxygen all the time, so you are able to go out or have a break away from home.

How long before I notice any benefits?

Many people notice some benefit within a few weeks of starting regular oxygen therapy. However, it usually takes several months before you will notice a general improvement in your condition. It is important to remember that oxygen will not prevent or reduce breathlessness.

Will I have to be treated with oxygen forever?

Everyone is different, so it is impossible to predict whether or not you will always need oxygen therapy. We will monitor you regularly to assess any change in your needs.

Possible side effects

- **Morning headaches.** These can be a sign that your oxygen flow rate may need adjusting. If you notice that you're having more headaches, particularly in the morning, please contact us on **023 8120 8119**.
- **Dry mouth or nose.** You can use KY jelly or Aqua gel to moisten your nose. Please do not use any products that are petroleum-based, as they are flammable.
- **Nosebleeds.** If a nosebleed continues for more than two weeks, please contact us on **023 8120 8119**.

Does home oxygen therapy replace my current treatments?

No, you should continue to take all existing medications unless told otherwise by your GP or respiratory team.

What is long-term oxygen therapy (LTOT)?

People with lung problems need to work much harder to get the oxygen levels their body needs. Some people need additional oxygen to meet their needs. This kind of oxygen is called long-term oxygen therapy (LTOT).

We use this treatment to help people get extra oxygen to their organs. To get maximum benefit you need to use this treatment for a minimum of 15 hours a day. The oxygen is supplied using a concentrator machine that takes oxygen from the air in the room.

What is ambulatory oxygen therapy (AOT)?

For some people with lung problems, the oxygen level in their blood is normal at rest, but may fall significantly when exercising. When this occurs, supplementary oxygen may be required. This is called ambulatory oxygen therapy (AOT).

Using ambulatory oxygen when exercising can improve your ability to perform activities and enable you to be more active.