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## PRIMARY AND COMMUNITY RESPIRATORY CARE

### 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 is a medication which has been prescribed by a Registered Health Professional to improve the levels of oxygen in your blood.

### **Who provides and supports me with my Home Oxygen?**

Your oxygen will be delivered by Baywater Healthcare. You will need to ensure there is someone home to accept delivery. An engineer will call from Baywater and they will carry out a risk assessment to ensure the oxygen is stored in the best place for you.

Your Home Oxygen Service will assess you at a minimum of yearly appointments. If you need more appointments your Health Care Professional will arrange a date for you to attend a clinic or will visit you at home.

If you are prescribed an oxygen concentrator machine, this will be stored in the safest place of your home and you may need the oxygen tubing piped around your home to reduce the risk of tripping over it and causing a fall.

## **Will I become dependent on Home Oxygen?**

You will not become dependent on oxygen and you should use the oxygen as directed. Your Home Oxygen Service will assess you regularly and will make the necessary decisions on how long your oxygen will be prescribed for. If at some point, they suggest you stop oxygen therapy, arrangements will be made to have it removed.

## **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. Most people do, but sometimes peoples' lungs improve to the point that oxygen is no longer needed. Sometimes people need higher doses of oxygen over time, so it is important that we regularly check that what you are on is still correct. We will monitor you regularly to assess any change in your needs

## **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. Breathlessness has a number of different causes, supplemental oxygen may help if your oxygen levels are low, but not always, and often other treatments are much more effective than oxygen for helping to make breathlessness more bearable.

## **Possible side effects**

- **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 an issue with nosebleeds continues for more than two weeks, please contact us on 01495 241263

## **Does Home Oxygen replace my current treatments?**

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

## **Why do some patients need oxygen therapy?**

Because our lungs are the only way that our bodies can absorb oxygen if they become damaged, they may not be able to supply our bodies with enough oxygen for it to work well. If our bodies do not receive enough oxygen then it has to work a lot harder, and over time this may mean that the body 'wears out' a lot quicker than it would if it had the right amount of oxygen to use. Giving supplemental oxygen means that whilst it is being given the body does not have to work as hard, and this means that people on supplemental oxygen can live longer, feel healthier, be more active, and feel less tired.

## **Important advice for home oxygen therapy**

### **Don't**

- Smoke or vape when receiving oxygen therapy or allow others to smoke near the oxygen
- Leave your oxygen running when not in use.
- Leave your nasal prongs or oxygen mask on the bed or chair with the oxygen running, as there may be a build-up of gas that could be dangerous.
- Use your oxygen equipment near an open fire or naked flames, such as matches, lighters, gas cookers or candles (within 3 meters)
- Use oxygen near other heat sources such as Electric or gas heaters or boilers (within 1.5 Meters)
- Use flammable products, such as cleaning Fluids, paint thinner, petroleum-based Creams or aerosols, when you are on oxygen therapy

### **Do**

- 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.
- Store oxygen in a well-ventilated area, kept Clean, dry and away from any sources of heat or fire

## My oxygen prescription



Re-order when I have \_\_\_\_\_ cylinders left

### YOUR HOME OXYGEN SERVICE

#### Community Home Oxygen Team:

Telephone: (Monday to Friday, 9am to 4pm)  
01495 241263

**Baywater Healthcare Home Oxygen supplier helpline:** for deliveries,  
equipment and general queries **7 days a week 365 days a year:**

**Telephone: 0800373580**

#### Useful links

Asthma and Lung UK

[www.asthmaandlung.org.uk](http://www.asthmaandlung.org.uk)

Action for Pulmonary Fibrosis

[www.actionpf.org](http://www.actionpf.org)

**This document is available in Welsh /  
Mae'r ddogfen hon ar gael yn Gymraeg**