

Oxygen in the home

This handout explains what you need to know when you use oxygen in the home. It covers when to call if you have problems, safety tips, having an emergency plan, taking trips, and how to care for the equipment.

What you need to know

- How to get oxygen supplies any time, day or night
 - Have the phone number of your oxygen supplier near the phone
- Do not adjust the flow rate unless you have been shown how by your doctor
- Do not use more than 50 feet of tubing
- Always have a backup oxygen supply

Call if you have problems

- Call your doctor if you have problems getting enough oxygen
 - A lot of headaches
 - Blue lips or fingernails
 - Feel very tired, confused, or restless
 - Hard to breathe, or breathe very slow
 - Very short of breath, more so than usual

Have an emergency plan

- Make sure you have an emergency plan
 - Have these phone numbers near the phone
 - Home care agency: _____
 - Respiratory therapist: _____
 - Your doctor or nurse: _____
 - Directions to an emergency care location
 - Transportation available
- Ask your power company to put you on the list for emergency reconnection in case of an outage
 - You may need a letter from your doctor

Fire safety

- Do NOT do list
 - No heat source closer than 6 feet
 - Gas stoves
 - Fireplaces
 - Electric baseboard heat
 - Any other heat sources

Oxygen in the home (cont)

- No electrical devices closer than 6 feet
 - Electric razors
 - Hair dryers
 - Electric blankets
 - Other electrical appliances that may spark
- Do not use extension cords for oxygen equipment
- Do not use flammable cleaning products near oxygen
 - Grease, oils, petroleum jelly, or alcohol in products
 - Air fresheners
 - Hair sprays
 - Any product that can catch fire
- Do not store oxygen in a closed pack or bag or any enclosed space
- Try not to use bedding or clothes made of wool, nylon or synthetic fabric
- Do this list
 - Put up a "No Smoking" sign
 - Keep a fire extinguisher nearby
 - Keep a smoke detector nearby and check the batteries often
 - Keep electrical equipment grounded
 - Store oxygen equipment in a room with good air flow
 - Only use water-based gels or creams

When you drive and travel with oxygen

- Make sure oxygen tank is secure in car
- Keep a window open a little
- It is OK to take an oxygen tank on a bus

Care of equipment

- Nasal prongs or cannula
 - Wash with warm soapy water every week
 - Rinse and dry well
 - Replace every 2 to 4 weeks
- Transtracheal catheter or collar (T-tube)
 - Clean and replace often
 - Humidifier bottle needs to be washed with warm soapy water
 - Rinse well before each refill
- Oxygen concentrator
 - Unplug and then wipe clean daily
 - Clean air filter 2 times a week
 - Get it checked every 3 months to make sure it is working well

Oxygen in the home (cont)

The content in this letter is intended as general information and may not apply to you or your condition. Talk to your doctor about how to best use this information and how to take care of your medical condition. This information is not intended to provide or replace professional medical advice or services.
