

Useful DOs and DON'Ts

Do inform the local fire service that you have an oxygen concentrator in the house

Do inform your electricity supplier that you are using an oxygen concentrator. You will be put on a priority list for reconnection in the event of a power failure.

Do inform your home insurance company. This should not affect your premium.

Do have a smoke alarm in your home.

Do not leave your concentrator running when it is not in use.

Do not leave your nasal prongs on the bed or chair with the oxygen running as there may be a build-up of gas which could be dangerous.

Do not smoke whilst receiving oxygen therapy.

Do not allow others to smoke in the same room while you are using the concentrator.

Do not use flammable products near your oxygen, or paraffin based cream on your nose if it becomes sore.

If you have any other questions about home oxygen therapy, or your treatment in general, please contact the hospital clinical nurse specialist on
020 7794 0500 ext. 8575

Other useful numbers

British Lung Foundation
020 7831 5831

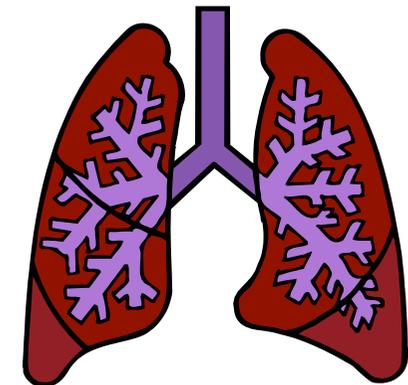
Breath Easy
020 7831 5831

National Asthma Campaign
020 7226 2260

DeVilbiss
01384 446600

Home oxygen therapy

A patient's guide



Patients often have questions about the use of home oxygen. Here are answers to some of the more common ones but please ask us if you want to know more.

Will I become dependent on oxygen?

No. Think of it as a vitamin supplement for the lungs and body. When you are at home, awake or asleep, you should use it. However, if you want to go out or have a break away from home there is no need to have oxygen all the time. You will not become dependent or 'hooked' on oxygen and it will never lose its useful effects.

Why 15 hours a day?

Several studies in Britain and America have shown that this amount of oxygen will prolong life and may improve its quality. The more you take the better, but the evidence is that an average of 15 hours a day should be minimum. This can be flexible to fit in with your lifestyle, and should not restrict you in any way. Further advice on this can be sought from the respiratory nurse.

How does oxygen work?

Oxygen is needed for all the organs of the body to function properly. If our air passages or lungs are damaged by a chronic lung disease the lungs cannot get enough oxygen into the blood and this puts a strain on the heart. By breathing in extra oxygen we can reduce this strain on both the lungs and the heart, and eventually it can also help improve memory, alertness, sleep, mood and general well being.

How long before I notice any benefits?

Many patients 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.

Are there any problems with oxygen therapy?

No. In some patients too rich a concentration of oxygen can be harmful, but you will have been carefully assessed as to how much your body requires in the hospital. You must not use your oxygen close to a fire, a naked flame, or paraffin or gas heater.

Cigarette and pipe smoking during oxygen therapy would be very dangerous.

Will I have to be treated with oxygen for ever?

Every patient is different and it is impossible to predict whether or not you will always need oxygen therapy. Usually, once the decision has been made that you will benefit from oxygen it will mean lifelong treatment.

Important

The cost of the electricity you use for your machine will be reimbursed. How you will be reimbursed may depend on how you currently pay your electricity bill – ask your supplier.

Contacts and telephone numbers

Consultant.....

Nurse.....