

Long term oxygen therapy at home



Information for patients Sheffield Teaching Hospitals



PROUD TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE

SHEFFIELD TEACHING HOSPITALS NHS FOUNDATION TRUST



The decision has been made that you require oxygen therapy at home. This leaflet has been developed as a guide to give you some useful information about having long term oxygen at home.

Why do I need to have oxygen at home?

You need oxygen at home because your oxygen levels are low and your organs need this to function well. It is not a treatment for breathlessness.

How do I know whether the oxygen is working?

You may not notice any difference with your symptoms, although you could feel less tired. Your oxygen saturations can be measured by a pulse oximeter machine by any health professional but the oxygen levels will be checked in Oxygen Clinic via a blood test from either your ear or your wrist.

How will I get the oxygen at home?

The oxygen will be ordered by a doctor or nurse to be installed by an engineer from Baywater. If you are in hospital, they can do this if a family member or friend can give them access to your property. The engineer from Baywater will advise you as to the best place to put the machine. You will receive your oxygen from a concentrator, with a back up cylinder in case of a power cut. An oxygen concentrator is a machine about the size of a small fridge that is plugged into an electric socket and is powered by electricity. The cost of the electricity used by the machine will be reimbursed by Baywater.

How much oxygen do I need and for how long?

Oxygen is given to treat low oxygen levels and you will have been carefully assessed for a specific rate, individual to your condition. The rate of oxygen is decided after a blood test from your wrist or ear, firstly breathing only room air and then on a specific litre(s) of oxygen. The blood test gives lots of information about breathing and how much oxygen is in the body. The minimum amount of time you should use your oxygen is 15 hours. Most people use oxygen overnight to make up the 15 hours, as this will enable you to have some time off it in the daytime.

The concentrator can be locked to your individual oxygen rate and you should not increase your oxygen without assessment by your doctor or oxygen nurse as you may become ill. **It is important that you do not turn your oxygen up.**

I smoke; will I be given oxygen?

- If you are a smoker it may not stop you being given oxygen but your treatment may not work as well as it should.
- A thorough safety risk assessment will be completed before oxygen is arranged.
- Oxygen cylinders will **not** be supplied to current smokers.
- It is important that if you need to have a cigarette, including an electronic cigarette, you should switch off the oxygen and go out of the room. It is recommended by Baywater that you should wait 20 minutes after removing oxygen before you smoke.
- It would be better if you could stop smoking; if you would like some help with this please contact Yorkshire Smokefree Service for support to quit smoking (details on page 8).

Useful do's and don'ts

Don't allow anyone to smoke or use an electronic cigarette in the same room you are using your oxygen therapy.

Don't use flammable products near your concentrator.

Don't use creams like Vaseline or soft paraffin on your nose or face, as these can ignite in the presence of oxygen.

Don't leave your concentrator running for long periods when it is not in use.

Don't leave your nasal prongs on the bed or chair with the oxygen running as there may be a build-up of gas that can be dangerous.

Don't change the flow rate on your concentrator; if needed we will arrange an engineer to visit following an assessment.

Do switch off your oxygen, remove your nasal prongs / mask and wait 20 minutes before having any contact with a heat source, ie cigarettes, hairdryer, cooker.

Do avoid naked flames such as cigarettes, candles, gas hobs, open fires.

Do have a working smoke alarm in your house.

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

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

Frequently asked questions

Will I become dependent on oxygen?

No. Think of it as a vitamin supplement for the lungs and body. If you want a break you may do so, providing you aim for 15 hours per day in total. You will not become “hooked” on your oxygen.

My nose is getting sore, how can I soothe it?

KY jelly or similar water-based lubricants are safe and may help. Do not use paraffin-based creams.

What should I do if there is a power cut or my machine breaks down?

Firstly don't panic. You will have been given a back-up cylinder to use if the electricity fails. You will not suffer any long-term harm if you are unable to use your oxygen for a few hours. If there is a problem with your oxygen concentrator and you are worried, please contact Baywater who will arrange for an engineer to visit.

Do I need to change my nasal prongs?

Yes you need to change your nasal prongs every 4 weeks. Baywater will have left you some replacements at home. If you run out, contact them and they will send some more out to you.

I have a gas cooker / fire do I need to change to electric?

No, but all oxygen equipment should be kept well away from naked flames such as candles, open fires or gas cookers. You should switch the oxygen off before using anything with a naked flame. Baywater will advise you about this.

Will I be able to take my oxygen to another address?

Yes, contact Baywater with the details and they can arrange for a temporary delivery of your oxygen to an alternative UK address.

What happens after I have been started on oxygen?

If you are being discharged from hospital with oxygen, you will receive an appointment to see the oxygen nurses in 6-8 weeks. The oxygen nurse will talk to you and reassess your oxygen with a blood test from your ear or a wrist. If you still require oxygen at this assessment, we will discuss your treatment fully with you and any changes to your equipment.

If you have been unwell, there is a chance that your oxygen levels could improve; in this case the oxygen may only be temporary and assessments will be made to remove the oxygen equipment.

Who do I contact if I feel unwell?

If you are unwell you should contact your GP.

For emergencies that do not require 999, call the NHS advice line on 111.

Who can I contact if I have any queries?

Baywater

- **0800 373 580** available 24 hours a day

Sheffield Home Oxygen Assessment Service

- **0114 226 9175 / 226 9207** available 8.00am - 4.00pm
Monday - Friday (not bank holidays)

Oxygen Clinic appointment queries:

- **0114 226 9402** available 8.30am - 3.00pm Monday-Thursday

Other useful sources of information

Breathe Easy

Breathe Easy is the support network of the British Lung Foundation. It provides information, support and friendship to all people living with a lung condition, their family, friends and carers. They meet on the second Wednesday of the month at 1.30pm - 2.30pm at:

Graves Health and Sports Centre

Bochum Parkway
Sheffield S8 8JR

- <http://www.blf.org.uk/support-in-your-area/breathe-easy-sheffield-support-group>
- 0114 265 6182
- Email: rgvscot@aol.com

British Lung Foundation Helpline

- 03000 030555
- Email: www.blf.org.uk

Stop smoking service / Yorkshire SmokeFree

- 0800 612 0011 (free from landlines)
- 0330 660 1166 (free from mobiles)

Baywater, the oxygen company that provides your oxygen, will leave an information booklet explaining the equipment at your house.

The details of your oxygen therapy are:

Flow ratel/min%

Hours you are expected to use oxygen:

Type of oxygen: **Concentrator** or **Cylinder**

(please circle)

I confirm that I have understood the instructions given to me regarding smoking and oxygen. I understand that before smoking any cigarette or e-cigarette I must switch off my oxygen, wait 20 minutes and leave the room. I understand that there must be no smoking on the property.

I agree that if there is evidence of unsafe smoking, my oxygen may be removed due to safety concerns.

Name

Signature

Date



Tear off and file copy (staff)

I confirm that I have understood the instructions given to me regarding smoking and oxygen. I understand that before smoking any cigarette or e-cigarette I must switch off my oxygen, wait 20 minutes and leave the room. I understand that there must be no smoking on the property.

I agree that if there is evidence of unsafe smoking, my oxygen may be removed due to safety concerns.

Name

Signature

Date

Any comments



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