

OXYGEN THERAPY AT HOME



PATIENT INFORMATION

Long term and short term - prescription for a minimum of 16 hours/day

1. Why am I on home oxygen for at least 16 hours/day?

You are on home oxygen because your body has lower than normal oxygen levels. This means that the heart has to work faster to get all oxygen around the body. Over a period of time this will put a strain on the heart and other organs.

2. What is the aim of my home oxygen therapy?

The aim is to bring oxygen levels up to normal for most of the time. This means the heart and other organs will not have to work as hard and therefore will not become strained, preventing them failing.

3. What is my home oxygen prescription?

_____ litres of oxygen **FOR A MINIMUM OF _____ HOURS PER DAY.** This amount was decided by doing special blood tests called blood gases. It is important that you never increase your oxygen litres.

4. Why a minimum of hours of oxygen every 24 hours?

Research has shown that to avoid straining the heart and other organs a minimum of 16 hours/day is needed. In fact up to 20 hours will ensure the greatest benefit.

5. What times should the oxygen be on and does it need to be given in one block or hours?

We always recommend that a large block of 12-14 hours is completed continuously, this includes the night time. Two examples would be:

7.00pm – 9.00am	=	14 hours	9.00pm – 9.00am	=	12 hours
11.00am – 3.00pm	=	4 hours	2.00pm – 6.00pm	=	4 hours
		18 hours			16 hours

These hours are worked out by each individual, depending on their activity. A golden rule is if you are resting at home you should have oxygen on. It takes some individuals several weeks to adjust to being on oxygen so please allow for this adjustment.

REMEMBER – IT IS A MINIMUM OF 16 HOURS

6. Can I go without home oxygen when I go out or in the shower?

Yes, this is safe.

7. Is home oxygen given for breathlessness?

No, it is not given for breathlessness. This is a common myth. If you are breathless this is because of the damage inside your lungs resulting in air trapping and the muscles working very hard to help you breathe.

8. What are the danger issues with oxygen?

You need to read the safety issues in the booklet that is supplied. Remember no sparks, flames, grease or oil near the equipment or yourself. This includes lotions on the skin.

9. Will I always be on home oxygen?

You have been placed on long term home oxygen therapy or short term oxygen therapy. The Clinical Nurse Specialist Respiratory or other members of the Respiratory Nursing Team will follow up with you regularly. You will be sent a six week follow-up appointment at the Respiratory Clinic and at this time you may come off home oxygen or may need to have it for several months or years.

10. If the oxygen concentrator alarms what do I do?

- Check there has not been a power cut
- Check the machine has not come unplugged at the wall or at the back of the machine
- Check that the oxygen tubing is not blocked
- Check that the machine is not overheated. Some rooms are too hot for the machine
- Follow the action plan provided. Remember you are safe without supplementary oxygen for 24 hours.

11. What maintenance does the oxygen concentrator need?

- Change the filter on the back every week. You have 2 filters, wash the one taken out in warm soapy water and dry in an airing cupboard, rotate the filters. **THIS IS VERY IMPORTANT.**
- Wipe machine down with damp cloth weekly.