



Royal Berkshire
NHS Foundation Trust

Ambulatory Oxygen Therapy Assessment

Information for patients,
relatives and carers

This leaflet provides information to patients and their relatives/carers about the assessment of oxygen and what to expect from your ambulatory oxygen clinic appointment.

What is oxygen?

We breathe in oxygen to nourish the body's cells and breathe out carbon dioxide, the body's waste product. In some patients with chronic lung disease, the oxygen levels in the blood are normal at rest but may fall significantly on exertion. In some people who are active, using supplementary oxygen when moving can help to improve the ability to perform activities.

Why have I received this appointment?

You have received this appointment so that we can complete an assessment of your oxygen requirements while you are walking (ambulatory oxygen assessment).

Your oxygen levels will have been monitored by a health care professional using a 'pulse oximeter', a small, painless probe that fits on to the end of your finger. While your levels were monitored, it is likely that they were found to be low while you were walking and as a result you have been referred to the oxygen assessment service in respiratory medicine for an 'ambulatory oxygen assessment'.

What should I know before I attend?

The assessment must be done when you are reasonably stable, i.e. not when you are getting over a chest infection.

If you have had a chest infection in the eight weeks leading up to your appointment, then please contact the number shown on the last page of this leaflet. Please wear suitable shoes for walking, bring your usual walking aids and wear gloves to keep your hands warm.

If you are using inhalers, please bring them with you to your appointment.

What should I expect during the assessment?

The appointment will last for approximately 60 minutes.

The ambulatory oxygen assessment consists of attaching a pulse oximeter to your finger. You are then asked to walk for a period of time. The walk is at your own pace; you can stop and rest when needed. This is a test providing an assessment of your oxygen levels during a time when you are active.

If your oxygen levels drop on movement we will then apply oxygen and ask you to repeat the walking test with oxygen. The oxygen can either be put into a trolley or carried in a bag.

Please wear flat/comfortable shoes that you are able to walk in and bring any walking aids that you normally use.

What happens after the test?

At the end of the test we will evaluate the results and discuss these with you.

If oxygen is provided, we will visit you at home 4-6 weeks after you have had the oxygen installed to ensure you have no problems. Thereafter, appropriate follow-up appointments will be organised through the community respiratory team.

If, following the assessment, the results show that you do not need an oxygen prescription we can discuss alternative options available to you and refer you on to other professionals as needed.

Oxygen and smoking

If you smoke, then oxygen therapy may not be provided as this is a safety hazard. Other people must also refrain from smoking in the house. Keep the oxygen away from sources of heat and ignition, and clear from any covers and curtains.

Electronic cigarettes should not be used while wearing the oxygen. Batteries of electronic cigarettes should not be charged in the vicinity of any source of oxygen.

Contact numbers

You may contact the Home Oxygen Assessment Service on the number below or your own GP.

Department of Respiratory Medicine

Level 2, South Block Royal Berkshire Hospital

Telephone: 0118 322 7159 Mon-Fri 8.00am – 5.00pm

Clinical Admin Team (CAT 11)

Telephone: 0118 322 6676 Mon-Fri 8.00am – 6.00pm

To find out more about our Trust visit www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk

Please ask if you need this information in another language or format.

RBFT Respiratory Medicine, August 2024.

Next review due: August 2026