



**Royal Berkshire**  
NHS Foundation Trust

# Supportive oxygen therapy

Information for patients,  
relatives and carers

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This leaflet aims to provide information to patients and their relatives/carers with regard to the appropriate use of supportive oxygen therapy at home.

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### What is oxygen therapy?

We breathe in oxygen to nourish the body's cells and breathe out carbon dioxide, the body's waste product.

The team caring for you have decided that oxygen therapy may be of benefit to manage your symptoms. Oxygen therapy involves receiving extra oxygen to maintain your body's normal oxygen levels.

### How is the oxygen delivered at home?

Oxygen at home is delivered via a machine called an oxygen concentrator. The machine is about the size of a bedside table and concentrates oxygen from the air in the room. It plugs into the mains electricity and uses around 350 watts of power (about the same as four 100w light bulbs). The cost of the electricity used is reimbursed to you by the oxygen provider.

Tubing from the concentrator can move around the house temporarily. A more permanent installation can be installed at a later date. The oxygen is then administered to you by a face mask or nasal cannulae. A back-up oxygen cylinder will be supplied in case of emergency, such as a power cut. A portable cylinder may also be prescribed if after assessment you think you would benefit from using oxygen outside your home

It is important that you do not alter the oxygen flow rate beyond what is prescribed for you as this can be dangerous. If you feel that your medical condition is worsening please seek help from your GP in the first instance.

## How long will I use the oxygen therapy for each day?

The time patients need to use oxygen therapy can vary. For some people short bursts for minutes are adequate, for others, they will need longer periods of hours. The team prescribing your oxygen therapy will detail how to use it and for how long.

## What happens next?

The respiratory nurse will visit you at home four weeks after you have the oxygen concentrator installed. After that the respiratory nurse will refer you to the community respiratory team for appropriate, continuing follow-up.

## Oxygen and smoking

**Oxygen is highly flammable.**

**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, in the vicinity of the machine or any oxygen outlet.**

**Keep the concentrator away from sources of heat and ignition, and clear of any covers and curtains in order to prevent fires. Tubing and cylinders may present tripping hazards - please take care.**

**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.**

Your home oxygen supply:

**Device:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Flow rate:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Hours per day:** \_\_\_\_\_

If you develop headaches, new confusion or increased daytime sleepiness, contact the Oxygen Assessment Service on 0118 322 7159 Monday to Friday 8am to 4pm.

If we have not responded within 4 hours please contact your GP or out of hours GP.

Follow up planned: \_\_\_\_\_

Respiratory Nurse: \_\_\_\_\_

Your oxygen company is: **Dolby Vivisol**

They can be contacted on: **0800 917 9840** (24 hour line)

Please do not hesitate to contact them if you have a problem or query regarding your oxygen. Alternatively, you may contact the Home Oxygen Assessment Service on the number below or your GP.

Department of Respiratory Medicine

Level 2, South Block, Royal Berkshire Hospital

Telephone: 0118 322 7159 Mon-Fri 8.00am – 4.00pm

Clinical Admin Team (CAT 11)

Telephone: 0118 322 6676 Mon-Fri 8.00am – 4.00pm

This document can be made available in other languages and formats upon request.

Department of Respiratory Medicine, October 2017

Review due: October 2019