

Using Oxygen at Home: Your Safety Guide

Medical-Surgical • Respiratory / Pulmonology

Oxygen is a medicine that helps your body get the oxygen it needs. It also makes fires start faster and burn hotter, so safety matters.

Use the right amount

- Your flow: _____ liters per minute. Hours a day: _____.
- **Do not change the flow unless your provider tells you to.**
- Too much oxygen harms some people with lung disease.

Keep fire away

- **No smoking or vaping in your home, by anyone.**
- Keep oxygen at least 10 feet (3 meters) from flames, gas stoves, candles, and fireplaces.
- Put "No Smoking: Oxygen in Use" signs on your doors.
- Keep your smoke alarms working.

Care for your skin

- Do not use petroleum jelly (Vaseline) or oily creams on your lips or nose. Use a water-based gel.
- Check behind your ears and inside your nose every day for sore spots.
- Pad the tubing over your ears if it rubs.

Stay safe at home

- Keep tubing out of walkways so you do not trip.

- Keep tanks upright in a stand or cart, away from heat.
- Plug your oxygen machine straight into the wall, not into an extension cord.

Plan for power outages

- Tell your power company and fire department that you use oxygen.
- Keep a full backup tank. Keep your supplier's phone number by the phone.

Call your provider today if you have

- Headaches in the morning or unusual sleepiness during the day
- More shortness of breath during usual activities
- Sore or red skin behind your ears or in your nose

Call 911 or your local emergency number if you have

- Severe shortness of breath after you check your tubing and tank
- New confusion, or you are hard to wake up
- Blue or gray lips or fingertips
- **A fire. Get out of the home first, then call.**

This handout supports, not replaces, advice from your own nurse or doctor.

Online: ncllexpace.com/patient-education/home-oxygen-safety/patient

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