

Oxygen Therapy

Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD)



YOUR PRESCRIPTION

- Oxygen is medication and should be used as prescribed. NEVER adjust oxygen on your own
- If you need oxygen for exertion, wear the oxygen with activities, chores, and exercise
- Practice putting regulator on/off the oxygen tank to prevent panic when tank runs out
- Practice switching to emergency tank during power outage
- Make list or plan of action for power outage or fire
- Do weekly drill to be familiar with actions plan and escape route



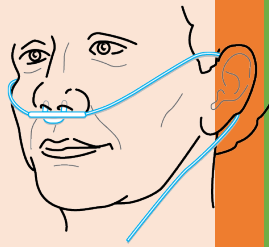
PREVENT DRYNESS

- Tank oxygen drier than home concentrator
- Use disposable humidification bottle for home concentrator
- Use only distilled water with non-disposable humidification bottle
- Use room humidifier if home is dry
- Empty, clean and dry daily
- Drink plenty of water and avoid too much caffeine
- Use only water-based lubricant in nares (K-Y jelly® or Ayer®)
- DO NOT use oil-based lubricant (Vaseline®, Vicks rub®)



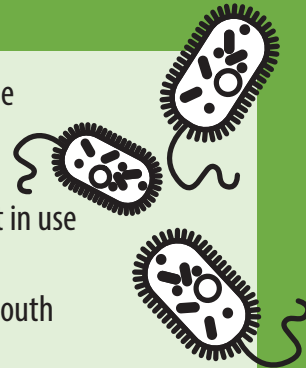
GETTING THE BEST FIT

- Nasal prongs and ear tubing should lay gently on skin
- DO NOT secure tubing under chin tightly
- Over tightening will cause rubbing, irritation and skin break down
- Use baby CORNSTARCH around ear area to reduce irritation
- Foam ear cushion may be requested from the home oxygen vendor



PREVENT INFECTION

- DO NOT lay oxygen cannula on the ground or unclean surfaces
- Clean nasal prongs daily and store in a clean dry bag when not in use
- Replace nasal cannula regularly
- Use a different cannula in your mouth if nose is congestion or bleeding



STORING OXYGEN

- Oxygen tanks must be store in approved racks or lay flat in clean, cool, and enclosed area
- DO NOT store tanks in garage or kitchen around heat, grease, flammable chemicals, or flame
- Concentrator should be in a central room with adequate tubing for walking around home
- Concentrator noise and heat may disturb sleep
- Have appropriate fire extinguisher nearby and check expiration date regularly
- Have oxygen warning signs at all entries to alert visitors and emergency rescuers



YOU CAN TRAVEL

- Talk with your primary care and pulmonary about travel plan whether you fly or drive
- Plan your activities and consider how much time you will be away from home
- Contact the Home Oxygen Clinic to arrange for portable oxygen equipment and adequate batteries for time away from home
- Equipment battery life dependent on your oxygen prescription flow rate
- Keep a signed copy of your oxygen prescription with portable oxygen equipment for airport security check



This patient education resource supports the VA/DoD Clinical Practice Guideline for Management of Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) (2021). For additional COPD information, visit: <https://www.healthquality.va.gov/guidelines/cd/copd>

