

Using Oxygen Safely

There are important safety factors to keep in mind when using oxygen. Oxygen is a safe gas and is non-flammable; however, it supports combustion. Materials burn more readily in an oxygen-enriched environment. Also follow the instructions from your oxygen supply company regarding safe usage. Never change the flow rate on your oxygen from what your doctor prescribed.



Keep Away from Heat and Flame

- Don't smoke and don't allow others to smoke near you. Post "No Smoking" and "No Open Flames" signs in and outside your home to remind people not to smoke.
- Keep sources of heat and flame at least five feet away from where your oxygen unit is being used or stored.
- Don't use oxygen while cooking with gas.
- Don't use any electrical appliances such as hair dryers, curling irons, heating pads and electric razors while wearing oxygen.
- If you wear oxygen while sleeping, consider using 100 percent cotton bedding which is less likely to cause static electricity.
- Always have a fire extinguisher nearby.

Don't Use Aerosols, Vapor Rubs or Oils

- Don't use aerosol sprays such as air fresheners or hairspray near the oxygen unit. Aerosols are very flammable.
- Avoid flammable creams and lotions such as vapor rubs, petroleum jelly or oil-based hand lotion. Use water-based products instead.
- Never oil the oxygen unit, and don't use it with oily or greasy hands.
- Don't use alcohol-based hand sanitizers, unless you thoroughly rub them into your skin and let your hands dry completely before handling oxygen equipment.

Store Oxygen Safely

- Keep your liquid oxygen unit upright at all times, never on its side.
- Don't store your oxygen in an enclosed space, like a closet or trunk.
- Be careful not to trip over the tubing. Never cut your tubing or use more than a 50-foot long piece.
- Never use an extension cord to plug in your concentrator or plug anything else into the same outlet.
- Turn off your oxygen when you're not using it. Don't set the cannula or mask on the bed or a chair if the oxygen is turned on.
- Keep oxygen concentrators several inches away from walls or curtains and never place anything over your concentrator.

Be Prepared

- Have a functioning fire extinguisher and smoke alarms close by at all times.
- Losing access to oxygen can be very dangerous if you need oxygen continually. Make sure to have backup equipment (normally a large oxygen tank) and tell your power company that you have life-sustaining equipment in your home.
- Consider buying a backup generator in the event of power outages.
- Monitor the gauges on your oxygen equipment and give your oxygen supplier plenty of time to deliver refills.