

Is Home Oxygen Right For You?

Everyone needs oxygen to breathe each day. You need oxygen because it gives your body the energy it needs to work right. If you have **C**hronic **O**bststructive **P**ulmonary **D**isease (COPD) your lungs and heart have to work harder to carry oxygen to all parts of the body. You may not be getting enough oxygen. This is why you may get short of breath easily. Some people with very bad COPD feel short of breath just sitting and doing nothing.

If this sounds like you, talk to your primary care provider (PCP). Your PCP can do a simple blood test to check your level of oxygen. If your oxygen level is too low your PCP may order oxygen for you to use at home. Using oxygen at home can help you feel better and live longer.

If your PCP orders home oxygen for you, he or she will tell you how much to use. This is called the oxygen flow rate. Think of oxygen as medicine you take. Never turn the oxygen flow rate up or down without first checking with your PCP. Your PCP will also tell you how many hours a day to use the oxygen. This amount is different for every person. Some only need extra oxygen when they exercise or are working around the house. Some need extra oxygen only when they sleep. Others need extra oxygen every day - all day long. Your PCP will tell what is best for you.



Using home oxygen is safe, but there are some DO's and DONT's:

Don't:

- Smoke while using oxygen. This is very bad!
- Let others smoke in the same room where you are using oxygen or storing oxygen equipment.
- Change the flow rate up or down without first checking with your PCP.
- Use grease, oils, petroleum jelly, alcohol or flammable liquids around oxygen equipment.
- Use oxygen equipment around open flames such as gas stoves or fireplaces.
- Use electrical equipment that might spark while wearing your oxygen.

Do:

- Post "NO SMOKING" signs in your home.
- Have working smoke detectors and fire extinguishers.
- Have a plan of what to do if you have a fire.
- Store oxygen equipment away from direct sunlight, heat sources and in an area with lots of air flow (ventilated).
- Ask your electric company to put you on a power priority restore list if you are using an electrically powered oxygen concentrator.