

# Living Well with **COPD**<sup>TM</sup>



**Integrating Long-Term  
Oxygen Therapy into Your Life**

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[www.LivingWellwithCOPD.com](http://www.LivingWellwithCOPD.com)

## The skills you need to manage your COPD

Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, or COPD, is a disease that can seriously affect every part of your life. As the disease progresses, it can take a toll on your daily activities. Fortunately, there is a lot that you can do to try and manage these limitations and improve your well-being. This is why we have created this series of workbooks on COPD self-management.

### How can this program help me with the self-management of the disease?

This module is part of the Living Well with COPD program. It is an educational program in which you learn skills to help manage your disease and adopt healthy new lifestyle behaviours. The Living Well with COPD program has been tested in several clinical trials and the results were very encouraging. Patients who used these workbooks in collaboration with their healthcare worker, “case manager” or resource person and physician had fewer exacerbations requiring hospitalizations or emergency room visits. Their quality of life has also improved, enabling them to do more of the activities they enjoyed, and better cope with their disease.

National and international guidelines agree that self-management education is extremely valuable for individuals with COPD. The Living Well with COPD Self-Management Program, which you can adapt to your own situation, was created by medical experts in collaboration with COPD patients.

This is your guide. Use it to write down your questions or concerns. Share it with people close to you so that they can understand what you are going through. Discuss whatever thoughts and feelings you have with your case manager or resource person and your physician.

Good luck with your program!

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## Welcome to the module “Integrating Long-Term Oxygen Therapy into Your Life” of the Living Well with COPD series

COPD patients are often concerned by the idea of getting long-term oxygen therapy.

Living well with COPD means understanding the disease and its treatments well. Oxygen therapy is an integral part of the COPD treatment.

In this module, we are going to explain why you need oxygen, how the oxygen equipment works and how this therapy can help you to live well on a day-to-day basis.

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## Integrating Long-Term Oxygen Therapy into Your Life

# Understanding the Need for Oxygen Therapy

Do you know why your doctor has prescribed oxygen therapy?

Does anything worry you about using oxygen?

In this module, these topics will be discussed and you will find out more about your oxygen therapy. Do not hesitate to ask your doctor or resource person for advice.

Many people on oxygen are anxious at the thought of having to use oxygen: this is a normal reaction. Their main concerns are:

- The significant changes oxygen therapy will make in their life.
- The dangers and the fears related to the use of oxygen.
- Feeling embarrassed or judged when using oxygen in public.

### Oxygen is essential for life

Oxygen is the body's "fuel." The organs and muscles use oxygen to function and discard carbon dioxide as waste.

As COPD gets worse, the amount of oxygen the lungs carry to the blood decreases. This can occur gradually. The carbon dioxide in some COPD patients' blood can also increase because their lungs can no longer eliminate it properly.



## Integrating Long-Term Oxygen Therapy into Your Life

# Understanding the Need for Oxygen Therapy

Healthy person

Person with COPD

The lungs make it possible for the blood to take in oxygen and eliminate carbon dioxide outside the body (gas exchange)

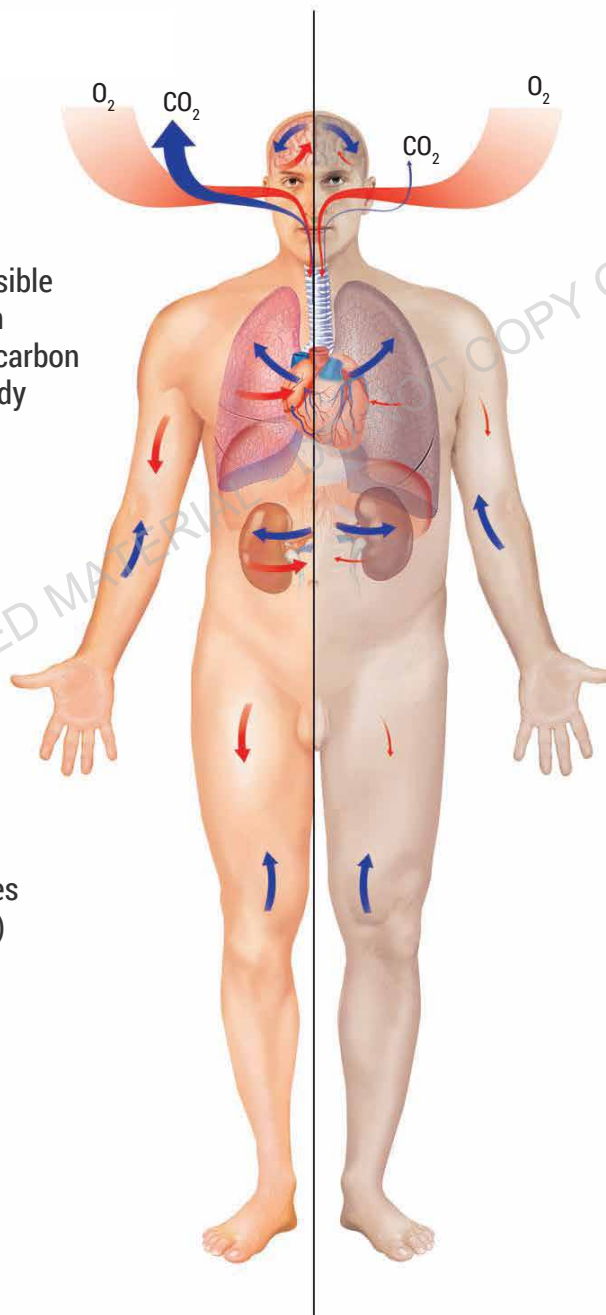
Oxygen is carried throughout the body in the blood

To function properly, the organs and muscles consume oxygen (fuel) and discard carbon dioxide (waste)

The organs (heart, kidneys, brain) and muscles receive less oxygen, which can impair their functioning

The blood contains less oxygen and accumulates carbon dioxide

The organs (heart, kidneys, brain) and muscles receive less oxygen, which can impair their functioning



→ Oxygen  
→ Carbon dioxide



## Integrating Long-Term Oxygen Therapy into Your Life

# Understanding the Need for Oxygen Therapy

Your doctor may have said you have “chronic respiratory failure” and therefore need long-term oxygen therapy.

**Chronic respiratory failure** is a permanent lack of oxygen in the blood, with or without accumulation of carbon dioxide.

Your health care provider examines you and decides to measure the amount of oxygen in your blood using one of these tests.

## Consequences of low oxygen in the blood

**A chronic lack of oxygen in the blood may cause difficulties in the body's function, and may show up in several ways:**

1. More rapid onset of fatigue, especially during physical activity.
2. Problems with memory and concentration; sleep disorders.
3. Swelling (oedema) of the legs.
4. A bluish tinge (cyanosis) of the fingertips, earlobes or lips.
5. Onset and/or aggravation of heart disease.

## Oximetry

A pulse oximeter is a device with a sensor that attaches to the finger or ear to estimate the amount of oxygen in the blood, or “oxygen saturation (SpO<sub>2</sub>).” This test, which is quick and painless, can tell whether your oxygen levels are too low (SpO<sub>2</sub> less than 90%). If so, a more precise arterial blood gas test is performed.

## Arterial blood gas test, or “arterial blood gas measurement”

A small amount of blood is taken from a blood vessel (usually an artery in the wrist). This test can accurately measure the amount of oxygen (or PaO<sub>2</sub>) and carbon dioxide (or PaCO<sub>2</sub>) in the blood. It can confirm the need for oxygen therapy.

**If you have chronic lack of oxygen in the blood, your doctor will prescribe a long-term oxygen therapy. This treatment is designed to maintain your blood oxygen at the level required for your organs to function properly.**



## Integrating Long-Term Oxygen Therapy into Your Life

# Understanding the Need for Oxygen Therapy

If you need supplemental oxygen, are you familiar with the benefits of long-term oxygen therapy?

### Objective

- To increase the amount of oxygen in your body to respond to the needs of the various organs (brain, heart, muscles, etc.).

### Benefits

- Prolongs life, even though oxygen cannot improve lung function.
- Reduces the feeling of fatigue and shortness of breath in some patients.
- May improve exercise tolerance, sleep, and quality of life.
- May improve heart function.

### Side effects

- None or minor (dry nose and eyes). Sometimes the tubing causes irritation behind the ears.

### Points to remember

- 1 Long-term oxygen therapy is not habit-forming.
- 2 Oxygen therapy is effective only when you are on it continuously for at least 15 hours/day because the human body cannot store oxygen. If you stop the therapy, the amount of oxygen in your blood will drop within a few minutes.
- 3 If you smoke, the treatment may be less effective and you risk burns or causing a fire.
- 4 In some provinces, a long-term oxygen treatment may not be prescribed for people who smoke.
- 5 Follow your prescription exactly. Do not attempt to change the flow rate of oxygen yourself. Extra oxygen can be harmful.



## Integrating Long-Term Oxygen Therapy into Your Life

Supplemental oxygen is a medication. As with other medication, your doctor prescribes an oxygen therapy that is adapted to your needs.

### Your oxygen prescription

#### What has your doctor prescribed?

- **Oxygen flow rate** (in litres per minute): this is the amount of oxygen required to cover your body's needs. You may have different flow rates: resting, on exertion and sleeping.
- **Duration of administration**: this is the number of hours per day during which you will have to take your therapy. At least 15 hours per day are necessary for the therapy to be effective.

You need to use your oxygen for \_\_\_\_\_ hours per day.

Single flow rate: \_\_\_\_\_ litres/minute

Different flow rates: resting \_\_\_\_\_ litres/minute

on effort \_\_\_\_\_ litres/minute

sleeping \_\_\_\_\_ litres/minute

#### For your treatment to be effective:

- If you take your oxygen at a different flow rate than the one prescribed or for only a few hours per day, you won't get the full benefits of the treatment.
- You should wear your oxygen at least 15 hours a day.
- If your oxygen is prescribed only when sleeping, you should use it every time you sleep, even when taking a nap.
  - In some provinces, nocturnal oxygen therapy (taken only during sleep) may not be prescribed.



## Integrating Long-Term Oxygen Therapy into Your Life

### Your oxygen prescription

#### When will the oxygen start to take effect?

Some people feel the effects of the oxygen quickly. Others need a little more time. Oxygen therapy is beneficial in the long term; do not get discouraged if you do not experience immediate improvement.

#### Can the effect of the oxygen wear off?

No, but the worsening of your respiratory disease may require a greater oxygen flow rate to maintain enough oxygen in the blood. Your doctor will monitor the state of your health and your test results on a regular basis in order to adjust your oxygen flow rate to the needs of your body.





## Integrating Long-Term Oxygen Therapy into Your Life

# Different Types of Oxygen Equipment and Accessories

What do you know about the ways of administering oxygen? Have you seen oxygen equipment?

What type of equipment has been prescribed for you?

There are different types of equipment to supply oxygen

Oxygen can be administered using:

- A concentrator (the most economic mode of supply)
- Oxygen cylinders
- Liquid oxygen tanks (the most expensive option)

All these equipments are easy to use. All you need to do is regulate the flow of oxygen coming out.

This equipment may be **fixed** or **portable**. Fixed equipment covers oxygen needs at home. Portable equipment is used to deliver oxygen when you leave home.

Your doctor will decide whether you need oxygen for your trips outside your home. In some provinces, portable oxygen is **not offered automatically**. If you need oxygen for your outings, your resource person will select **the equipment best suited to your needs**.



## Integrating Long-Term Oxygen Therapy into Your Life

# Different Types of Oxygen Equipment and Accessories

### What is an oxygen concentrator?

An oxygen concentrator is an electrical device that concentrates the oxygen in ambient air: this means it does not have to be refilled.

Most concentrators are fixed (they weigh 20-30 kg and are on wheels). Others are portable on a small cart, on a strap or in a backpack.

### What are the electrical requirements of a concentrator?

Fixed concentrators have an electrical connection. Portable concentrators are equipped with batteries and can also be plugged into an electrical connection. An alarm will sound if there is a malfunction or power failure.

### Don't forget!

Every time you turn on the concentrator, wait for a few seconds before checking the flow control. When you turn it off, do not reset the flow control to zero. Leave it open to relieve excess pressure.

Do not place objects on top of the concentrator, especially glasses of water. Do not obstruct the air-intake filters: for example, do not place the concentrator on a carpet, or store it in a closet

#### Your resource person will:

- Give you detailed use and maintenance advice.
- Explain specific safety precautions for this mode of supply.



Some concentrators are combined with another electrical device, a compressor, which allows the refilling of oxygen cylinders for use on trips outside.



## Integrating Long-Term Oxygen Therapy into Your Life

# Different Types of Oxygen Equipment and Accessories

## What is a medical oxygen cylinder?

A medical oxygen cylinder contains oxygen in gas form, compressed under heavy pressure in order to contain more gas. A pressure regulating valve (regulator) at the top of the cylinder reduces the oxygen pressure to make it usable.

## What is the oxygen consumption of an oxygen cylinder?

The consumption depends on the size of the cylinder and the flow rate used, which is why these cylinders are most often used as a supplement to a concentrator; i.e., when you are going out, or if there is a malfunction or power failure.

Cylinders may also be equipped with an “oxygen saving valve,” which increases their oxygen conservation: the valve cuts off the oxygen just after your inhalation, and restores the flow on your next inhalation.

## Don't forget!

Every time you turn on the cylinder, check the flow control. When you have finished using your cylinder, turn off the valve, wait for the indicator to return to the red section and then change the flow rate to zero.

### Your resource person will:

- Give you detailed use and maintenance advice.
- Choose with you the size of your cylinder based on your needs.
- Help you gauge the number of hours of autonomy of a cylinder.
- Explain specific safety precautions for this mode of supply.



The flow needed from an oxygen concentrator and an oxygen cylinder may be different because of the oxygen's purity level.

Depending on their size and weight, some cylinders can be transported using a strap or a small cart.



## Integrating Long-Term Oxygen Therapy into Your Life

### Different Types of Oxygen Equipment and Accessories

#### What is a liquid oxygen tank?

These tanks look like Thermos bottles; they contain liquid oxygen (oxygen liquefies at very low temperatures): this means a large amount of oxygen can be stored in a small space. Liquid oxygen becomes gas as it leaves the tank and it is this gas that you inhale.

#### What is the oxygen consumption of a liquid oxygen tank?

You will receive two types of tanks:

- A large tank that does not leave your home. This tank does not use electricity but needs to be refilled on a regular basis by your provider, depending on the flow rate and the number of hours of use per day (on average 2 to 4 times a month).
- One small portable tank, for moving around your home or outside. You refill this tank yourself from the large tank. It can be transported using a strap, on a cart or in a backpack.

#### Don't forget!

**Liquid oxygen evaporates:** The amount of liquid oxygen in the tank will dissipate even if the flow control is at zero. This means it is a good idea to refill the portable tank just before going out.

**Liquid oxygen is extremely cold and can cause burns:** if the tank valve releases a small amount of liquid oxygen, wipe it with a clean, dry cloth and always wear gloves.

#### Your resource person will:

- Give you detailed use and maintenance advice.
- Help you gauge the number your equipment will last.
- Explain how to refill the portable tank yourself.
- Explain specific safety precautions for this mode of supply.



## Integrating Long-Term Oxygen Therapy into Your Life

# Different Types of Oxygen Equipment and Accessories



### Nasal cannula

The oxygen will be delivered from the supply to your nose by means of the “cannula.”

- Blow your nose regularly to prevent secretions from building up in your nose.
- Breathe through your nose. Breathing through your mouth dries out the mucous membranes.
- If your nose is dry, use a water-based lubricant. Never use petroleum jelly (Vaseline®) or an oil-based lubricant. These substances can pose a fire hazard when they come into contact with oxygen and can interfere with the flow.
- Clean your nasal cannula every day and change them on a regular basis (around every 3-4 weeks).

Before attaching your nasal cannula, make sure the oxygen is flowing correctly out of the tips by immersing them in a glass of water (bubbles appear) or touching the ends of the cannula with a wet finger (cold sensation).



### Connector tube

This is an extension tube that lets you move around the home while remaining connected to the oxygen supply.

- Make sure this tube is not twisted or caught, which would prevent the normal flow of oxygen.
- As with the cannula, you can immerse the tip of the tube in a glass of water to make sure the oxygen is flowing correctly.
- Avoid multiple connections: an excessive length of tubing (more than 30 metres) and multiple connections increase the chance of leaks and reduce the amount of oxygen you are inhaling.



## Integrating Long-Term Oxygen Therapy into Your Life

### Safety rules

Oxygen does not burn or explode, but it does fuel fire. Three things are needed to start a fire: oxygen, heat and combustible material. When a flame or spark has an oxygen supply, the fire burns much faster and at a much higher temperature. It is very important to observe the following safety rules to avoid serious incidents that could affect you or those around you.



- 1** Never smoke or let anyone smoke in the room where your oxygen supply is located (concentrator, cylinder, tank, nasal cannula). Never let anyone smoke close to you when you are using your oxygen.

If you or members of your family smoke, this is a good time to stop. There are lots of ways of helping you to quit smoking; talk to your doctor or resource person about it. Do not forget that in some provinces, oxygen therapy may not be prescribed for people who smoke.



- 2** Never place the oxygen supply near live flame, sparks or heat such as a lighter, candles, matches, fireplace, radiator, furnace, water heater or stove.

Keep the oxygen supply at least 3 metres (10 feet) away from any source of flame or spark. If there is a power failure, use a flashlight. If you use a gas or electric stove, turn off your oxygen equipment and take off your nasal cannula before using the stove.



- 3** Do not oil or lubricate your oxygen equipment. Keep the equipment away from any flammable material (grease, oil, paint, gasoline, solvent, alcohol, etc.).



- 4** Do not use your equipment when:  
You are applying to your body an oil-based product (cream, make-up, insect repellent).  
You are using an aerosol container (paint, air freshener, insecticide, etc.).



- 5** Do not try to repair your equipment yourself. Contact your resource person or your home oxygen provider.

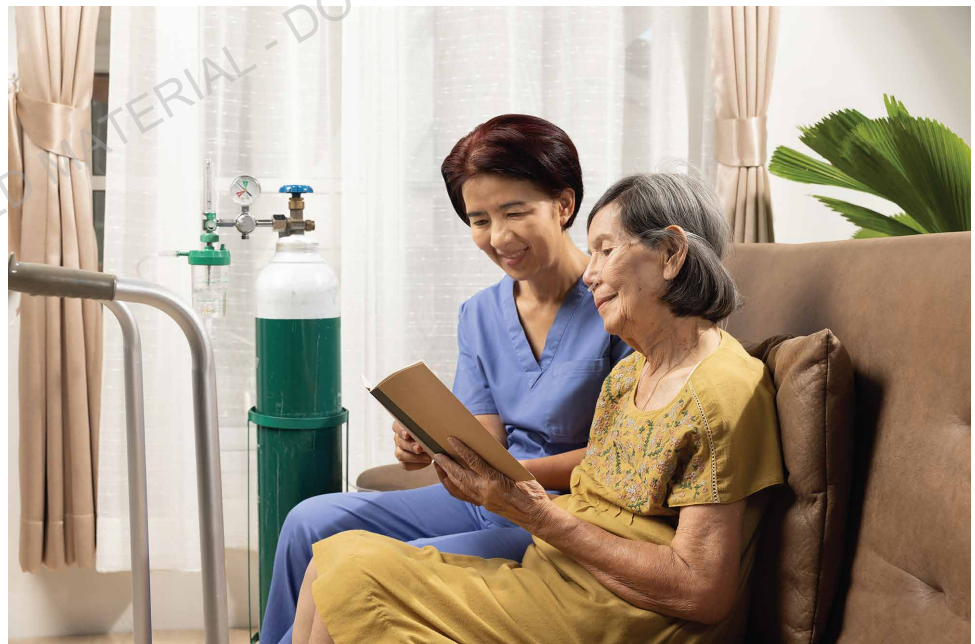


## Integrating Long-Term Oxygen Therapy into Your Life

# Living with Long-Term Oxygen Therapy

When needed the use of oxygen is an integral part of your treatment for COPD. You are now going to learn how your oxygen therapy will help you to live well on a day-to-day basis:

- To do everyday activities and those that require physical exertion (such as exercise)
- To sleep well
- To travel
- During periods of symptoms worsening (exacerbations)





## Integrating Long-Term Oxygen Therapy into Your Life

Your oxygen needs increase with effort intensity. Arm movements (for example, washing your hair or face) use a great deal of oxygen. This is why it is so important to use oxygen while doing these types of activities.

# Living with Long-Term Oxygen Therapy

## Physical activities and oxygen

Many day-to-day activities require physical effort, for instance, climbing stairs, exercising, cycling, washing, making your bed, using the toilet, housework and even sexual relations.

## Objective

- To increase the amount of oxygen in your blood and supply enough to all organs during physical effort.

## Benefits

- Be less tired, get back energy.
- May have less shortness of breath on exertion (for some people).
- May improve exercise endurance (e.g., taking longer walks).
- Do more activities you enjoy.

## Points to remember

- 1** Oxygen can help you accomplish your day-to-day tasks:
  - Use oxygen when you are making your bed, getting dressed, taking a bath or shower, using the toilet, etc.
- 2** Your oxygen prescription will indicate whether you need to increase your flow rate during exertion.

Talk about it with your doctor and your resource person, who will be able to help you.



## Integrating Long-Term Oxygen Therapy into Your Life

# Living with Long-Term Oxygen Therapy

Other sleep disorders, for instance, a disease called “sleep apnea,” can occur in people with COPD. These disorders may require special treatment, other than oxygen.

## Getting a good night's sleep with oxygen

COPD patients often have sleeping disorders. Because breathing slows down, the amount of oxygen in the blood decreases during sleep, which can be disruptive.

### Objective

- To prevent a drop in the amount of oxygen in the blood during the night (nocturnal desaturation).

### Benefits

Oxygen taken when sleeping may:

- Improve the quality of sleep for some people.
- Avoid complications associated with night-time drop in oxygen.

### Points to remember

- 1** If sleep disorders persist in spite of the use of oxygen, talk to your doctor about it because a more in-depth study could be needed (sleep study).
- 2** It is possible that you may need some time to adapt to the use of nasal cannula during sleep. There exist different types of cannula and comfort adapters. Talk to your resource person if necessary.
- 3** Do not forget that in some provinces, nocturnal oxygen (taken only during sleep) may not be prescribed.



## Integrating Long-Term Oxygen Therapy into Your Life

# Living with Long-Term Oxygen Therapy

## Getting a good night's sleep with oxygen



Do you have any concerns about the use of oxygen during sleep? If so, which ones?

Talk about them with your doctor and your resource person, who will be able to help you.



## Integrating Long-Term Oxygen Therapy into Your Life

# Living with Long-Term Oxygen Therapy

## Travelling with oxygen

### Objective

- To continue travelling (for work, recreation, etc.).
- To plan your trip carefully to minimise unexpected situations.

### Benefits

- Make the most of your trip.

### Points to remember

- 1** Let your home oxygen health professional know at least 1 month before your departure.
- 2** If possible, arrive at your destination on a business day. Verify with your resource person whether you will need to rent the oxygen equipment once you have arrived at your destination. Or, if you will be bringing your own equipment.
- 3** There are different precautions to take with oxygen, depending on the means of transportation used and where you are going (a trip to another country, a trip in a recreational vehicle, a cruise, etc.). Medical and administrative procedures are sometimes necessary: set aside enough time for them before your departure.



## Integrating Long-Term Oxygen Therapy into Your Life

# Living with Long-Term Oxygen Therapy

### Points to remember

#### 4 If you foresee travelling:

- By **car**, make sure that your equipment is properly attached, if possible, within a specifically designed support, and standing on the backseat.
- By **train or boat**, contact the transportation company who will be able to answer to your needs.
- By **plane**, contact the airline company (not all companies supply oxygen during the flight) and expect additional costs.



You should inform the airline company in advance, since some administrative procedures are necessary; for example, they may ask you for a medical certificate.

The Federal Aviation Agency (FAA) rules do not let you fly with oxygen cylinders or liquid oxygen. You can fly with FAA approved oxygen concentrators.

Note: it is important that you use the oxygen during the flight since the oxygen concentration in the plane decreases as the plane increases its altitude. You may also need to adjust your flow rate when flying, so talk to your doctor before flying to discuss about any adjustments that may be needed.

If you are planning a trip, talk to your doctor and your resource person about it. They will help you plan your trip and will be able to give you additional information.



## Integrating Long-Term Oxygen Therapy into Your Life

# Living with Long-Term Oxygen Therapy

## Using oxygen during a worsening of COPD symptoms (exacerbation)

During a worsening of your symptoms (flare-up) your lungs function less well and the body's oxygen needs increase, which can lead to a drop in the amount of oxygen in the blood. This is why it is very important to use your oxygen during these periods.

### Objective

- To supply enough oxygen to your body during an exacerbation.

### Benefits

- Be less tired and short of breath.
- Avoid complications and reduce the risk of hospitalization.

### Points to remember

- 1 Oxygen does not treat the cause of the exacerbation but it avoids some complications.
- 2 Follow your oxygen prescription carefully:
  - During a COPD exacerbation try to use your oxygen all the time (24/7).
  - Increase your oxygen flow rate **only** on your doctor's advice.

Talk to your resource person and your doctor about using your oxygen therapy during a worsening of COPD symptoms.

Contact your doctor immediately or go to the Emergency Room if you notice the onset or aggravation of the following symptoms: headaches, drowsiness, confusion, blue fingertips, sleep disorders, agitation or swelling (oedema) of the ankles.



## Integrating Long-Term Oxygen Therapy into Your Life

# Adjusting to Long-Term Oxygen Therapy

Are you ready to use the oxygen your doctor has prescribed?

Oxygen can change the way you see yourself. You may feel trapped, or useless to your family and friends. You may feel embarrassed by other people's stares when you are using your equipment. These are common reactions.

We are going to look at the concerns often felt by people who are starting a long-term oxygen therapy:

- You can discuss them with your resource person.
- You can also develop a plan for improving the situation such as trying to get additional information, cultivating a positive attitude or asking for help.





## Integrating Long-Term Oxygen Therapy into Your Life

### Adjusting to Oxygen Therapy

<b>Emotional Consequences</b> (awareness of death and perception of the disease progression, feeling of dependency, loss of self-esteem...)
My concerns:
My plan:
<b>Family-Related and Social Consequences</b> (loss of job, limited recreational activities and mobility, isolation...)
My concerns:
My plan:
<b>Equipment-Related Constraints</b> (noise, tubing, deliveries...)
My concerns:
My plan:

#### Don't forget!

Don't keep your fears to yourself. Discuss your feelings with your doctor, your resource person, your family and friends.



## Integrating Long-Term Oxygen Therapy into Your Life

### Talking to Family and Friends about Oxygen Therapy

How did they react to the news?

What were their biggest fears or concerns?

You can tell your family and friends that oxygen will allow you to live longer and do more. Tell them that even though you are on oxygen, you will continue to be active and to enjoy life within your limits. Tell them that having an oxygen treatment does not mean that you are on the terminal phase of your COPD; on the contrary, by not using the oxygen your life will not improve.

Ask your family and friends to express their concerns.

**If you, your family or your friends have any concerns, talk to your doctor or resource person about them.**





## Integrating Long-Term Oxygen Therapy into Your Life

### Home visit

Your resource person would like to talk to you about long-term oxygen therapy and the equipment you are using.

The resource person asks:

**What are you feeling?**

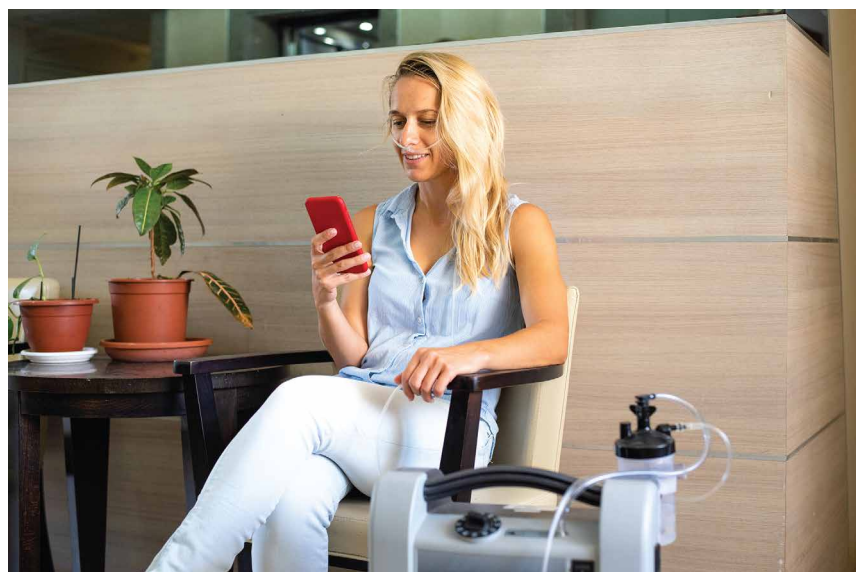
  

**What are the advantages of using oxygen?**

**Don't forget!**

- Oxygen is an important part of your treatment. You need oxygen therapy to improve your quality of life.
- Oxygen therapy maintains the amount of oxygen needed for your organs to function properly. With this therapy, you will feel better and you will be able to do more.





## Integrating Long-Term Oxygen Therapy into Your Life

### Let us hear the story of David

Living with supplemental oxygen has been a journey for me, one that has taught me resilience, patience, and the importance of adapting to new circumstances. It's not easy, but it's a reality I face daily, and I've learned how to live with it.

In 2016, I was diagnosed with COPD, and I didn't fully comprehend the scope of what that meant for me. I kept pushing through, thinking that I could just work harder and make it all go away. I would spend all of my day in the workshop fixing things up, I would go back in for lunch and dinner, then do more work till late. My sons have this same mentality and work ethic. But as the years went by, the symptoms worsened.

At first, it was tough—mentally and physically. I couldn't walk to my workshop without needing to pause and catch my breath. Even doing simple things around the house left me feeling exhausted. I had moments when I just felt defeated, thinking that this was it, and I couldn't do anything anymore. I used to be the person who was always on the go, and suddenly I couldn't keep up.

My doctors told me that I would need supplemental oxygen to support my breathing, something that at first felt like an overwhelming change. The very thought of being tied to an oxygen tank made me feel like I was losing a part of myself. I was hesitant, but I quickly realized that it was a tool that helped me breathe more easily and allowed me to continue doing the things I loved. Whether it was working on motors in my garage or just relaxing at home, the oxygen helped keep me going. It gave me the support I needed to feel more comfortable, especially when I'd get too winded without it.

The hardest part was overcoming the fear and anxiety that came with being dependent on oxygen, especially when I had to leave the house. But I've learned to rely on it as part of my routine, not as a crutch but as something that helps me stay in control. I found that I could relax my breath, calm my mind, and push through. I even started going to church, something I hadn't done in years. One day, I walked in without my oxygen, thinking I could get through the service. It was tough at first, but by the end, I felt more at peace than I had in months. My ability to calm myself, even in that moment, reminded me that I was still in control.

My oxygen helps me maintain my independence, not lose it. It's become a reminder that I can still do the things I love, even if I need a little extra support.

# Now test your confidence level with your Oxygen Therapy

On a scale of 1 to 10, circle the number that best represents whether you feel able:

To use and maintain your equipment properly.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10  
not at all confident very confident

To take your therapy as prescribed, \_\_\_\_\_ hours per day.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10  
not at all confident very confident

To use your oxygen away from home, if prescribed.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10  
not at all confident very confident

To use your oxygen for activities that require physical exertion (exercise, activities of daily living).

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10  
not at all confident very confident

To use your oxygen during sleep.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10  
not at all confident very confident

# Now test your confidence level with your Oxygen Therapy

On a scale of 1 to 10, circle the number that best represents whether you feel able:

To travel with your oxygen.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10  
not at all confident very confident

To take your oxygen therapy all the time (24 hours per day) during a period of symptoms worsening.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10  
not at all confident very confident

On a scale of 1 to 10, circle the number that best indicates if you believe your oxygen therapy:

Will help you to prevent an aggravation of your health condition.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10  
not at all confident very confident

Will help you to do more activities in your day-to-day life.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10  
not at all confident very confident

# My Oxygen Therapy

My Oxygen Prescription				
Duration	Flow Rate			
____ hours/day	single ____ L/min	resting ____ L/min	on exertion ____ L/min	sleeping ____ L/min
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Follow the prescribed flow rate.</li> <li>In the event of an exacerbation (aggravation of COPD), use your oxygen all the time 24 hours/ day) and contact your resource person for an assessment of your health state.</li> </ul>				

General Recommendations	
Do	Don't
Inform your resource person of any changes to your prescription.	Never adjust the oxygen flow rate without a doctor's prescription.
Clearly display a "No smoking – I'm on oxygen" sign.	Don't smoke or let anyone smoke near you or your oxygen equipment.
Keep your oxygen equipment in a well-ventilated space and make sure the equipment is stored securely.	Keep your oxygen equipment away from any source of live flame (lighter, matches, candles, gas stove, etc.).
Clean your equipment on a regular basis following your resource person's instructions.	Keep your oxygen equipment away from heat sources (stove, heating). Your oxygen equipment should not be stored in a cupboard.
If your nose is dry, use only water-based lubricants.	Do not use your equipment when you are handling flammable materials (oil, grease, aerosol containers).
Check regularly for leaks (by immersing the tip of your nasal cannula and oxygen tube in a glass of water).	Avoid multiple connectors and excessive lengths of extension tubing.
Contact your resource person if any adjustments/repairs are necessary.	Don't try to repair your oxygen equipment yourself.

Don't Forget
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Contact your resource person if you have any questions about your equipment.</li> <li>Contact your doctor immediately or go to the Emergency Room if you notice the onset or aggravation of the following symptoms: headaches, drowsiness, confusion, blue fingertips, sleep disorders, agitation or swelling (oedema) of the ankles.</li> </ul>

# Acknowledgements

Living Well with COPD was developed in coordination with health professional educators on COPD and patients with COPD.

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J. Bourbeau, respirologist  
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H. Tremblay, expert patient

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