Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center

PATIENT & CAREGIVER EDUCATION

What to Know About Your Home Oxygen Setup

This information explains what you need to know when you are sent home with supplemental (extra) oxygen.

Your doctor has recommended you use supplemental oxygen to make your breathing easier. An outside company will deliver your home oxygen setup. MSK does not deliver oxygen tanks and does not set up the oxygen at your home.

How will my oxygen be delivered?

Your care team will contact an oxygen supply company to schedule a delivery. They'll make sure your health insurance covers the home oxygen setup. Your care team will help arrange the home oxygen delivery before you leave the hospital.

Delivery can take up to 24 hours (1 day). If your oxygen is not delivered, call your care team.

Your home oxygen set up will include:

- **An oxygen concentrator (KON-sen-TRAY-ter).** This is a device that plugs into the wall.
- **Portable oxygen tanks**. This is an oxygen tank that you can take with you whenever you leave the house.

Make sure you have enough space in your home to store these tanks. They must remain upright, firmly secured, and in a dry location. Keep them away from sunlight, heaters, electrical devices, and extreme cold.

- **A nasal cannula.** This is a plastic tube with 2 ends. The end with 1 opening attaches to the oxygen tank. The other end has 2 openings. It sits just inside your nose. The oxygen flows out of the tank through the tube and into your nose. This is like what you had in the hospital.

When the oxygen supply company delivers your home oxygen set up, they'll go over how to use it. It's important to know how to contact your oxygen supply company if there are any issues. Make sure to ask them:

- Who you can contact if something is wrong with your home oxygen set up.
- When is the best time to order portable tanks. For example, should you order new tanks when the current tanks are less than half full?
- How to order more oxygen supplies (such as portable oxygen tanks) when you need them.

How do I stay safe with an oxygen set up in my home?

Follow the safety instructions below, and the instructions your oxygen supply company gives you. This will help keep you and the people around you safe.

- Do not have your home oxygen set up within 10 feet of smoke, flames, or fire. This includes:
  - Cigarettes or cigars.
  - Electronic smoking devices, such as vapes.
  - Stoves or ovens.
  - Gas heaters.
  - Fireplaces.
- Avoid using petroleum products on your skin, such as lotions, jellies, and creams. They could cause burns. Use water-based products instead (such as CeraVe® or La Roche-Posey®).
- Remember to store the portable oxygen tanks upright (not lying down) and firmly secured. Follow your company's instructions.

- Make sure there's a working smoke detector in your home.
- Conserve (save) your oxygen supply. When you're not using your home oxygen set up, turn off the oxygen tank.

Tell your local fire department and power supply company you use an oxygen tank. This is important for them to know in case of an emergency or if your power goes out.

Do I need to bring my portable oxygen tank to my appointments at MSK?

Bring a portable oxygen tank to your MSK appointments if:

- You need to wear your oxygen all the time.
- You need to wear your oxygen whenever you exert yourself (such as when you do physical activity).

Before you leave home, make sure you have the right equipment. Make sure you bring enough full tanks to get you to and from your appointment.

If you use a concentrator at home, make sure it's fully charged before arriving to your appointment.

MSK can give you an oxygen tank to use at your appointment, but **you cannot take an MSK tank home.**

When you arrive and check in, ask an MSK staff member to help you transfer to an MSK tank. A nurse will help you with this transfer so you can conserve your home supply.

If you have questions or concerns, contact your healthcare provider. A member of your care team will answer Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Outside those hours, you can leave a message or talk with another MSK provider. There is always a doctor or nurse on call. If you're not sure how to reach your healthcare provider, call 212-639-2000.

For more resources, visit www.mskcc.org/pe to search our virtual library.

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