



Royal Berkshire
NHS Foundation Trust

Ambulatory Oxygen (AO) Therapy

Information for patients,
relatives and carers

This leaflet provides information to patients and their relatives/carers about the appropriate use of ambulatory oxygen therapy at home.

What is oxygen?

We breathe in oxygen to nourish the body's cells and breathe out carbon dioxide, the body's waste product. In some patients with chronic lung disease, the oxygen levels in the blood are normal at rest but may fall significantly on exertion. In some people who are active, using supplementary oxygen when moving can help to improve the ability to perform activities.

What is ambulatory oxygen (AO) therapy?

You have had an ambulatory oxygen assessment, during which your oxygen levels were monitored while walking.

Ambulatory oxygen means "oxygen required for walking", but it can be used for a range of activities, including housework. It aims to help with your independence, going out of the house and staying active.

When should I use the ambulatory oxygen?

The results of the assessment completed suggested that you benefitted from using oxygen when walking. You should, therefore use the oxygen when carrying out activities that make you feel breathless. Patients have reported that they find the oxygen can help while carrying out activities such as dressing, shopping, vacuuming and doing other household chores as well as walking and getting exercise.

A chart will be provided for you to complete so that your oxygen usage can be assessed and optimised.

Can oxygen be harmful?

Oxygen is safe when used appropriately. It is important that you do not adjust the oxygen flow rate that was ordered for you. It has been ordered for you following your assessment and changing it or using it at rest can be very harmful. Please do seek medical advice if you experience headaches or increased sleepiness when using the oxygen.

If you do feel more short of breath or your breathing deteriorates from your normal level do not increase the oxygen or use it at rest. Please contact your GP as soon as possible to seek a medical review of your condition.

Can I still go away on holiday?

The AO is there to facilitate your activities and this includes holidays. It is important to live life to the full! If you do wish to go away on holiday and you are planning to fly, you may require a flight assessment.

Please contact the Oxygen Service or Clinical Administration Team as soon as possible (telephone numbers on the back page of this leaflet).

Please call Vivisol to make arrangements for oxygen to be provided. Trips abroad will incur a payment.

What happens next?

The respiratory nurse will visit you at home 4-6 weeks after you have the oxygen installed to ensure you have no problems and thereafter appropriate follow-up appointments will be organised through the community respiratory team.

Oxygen and smoking

If you smoke, then oxygen therapy may not be provided as this is a safety hazard. Other people must also refrain from smoking in the house. Keep the oxygen away from sources of heat and ignition, and clear from any covers and curtains.

Electronic cigarettes should not be used while wearing the oxygen. Batteries of electronic cigarettes should not be charged in the vicinity of any source of oxygen.

Your home oxygen supply:

Device: _____

Flow rate: _____ **Hours per day:** _____

Follow up planned: _____

Respiratory Nurse/Oxygen Assessment Nurse: _____

Your oxygen supplier is Vivisol.

They can be contacted on 0800 917 9840 (24 hour line)

Please do not hesitate to contact them if you have any problems or queries regarding your oxygen supply.

Contact numbers

You may contact the Home Oxygen Assessment Service on the number below or your own GP.

Department of Respiratory Medicine

Level 2, South Block Royal Berkshire Hospital

Telephone: 0118 322 7159 Mon-Fri 8.00am – 5.00pm

Clinical Admin Team (CAT 11) Telephone: 0118 322 6676

Mon-Fri 8.00am – 6.00pm or email rbb-tr.cat11@nhs.net

To find out more about our Trust visit www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk

Please ask if you need this information in another language or format.

RBFT Respiratory Medicine, December 2023.

Next review due: December 2025