

How to use an Oxygen Concentrator

An oxygen concentrator can assist someone who has breathing difficulties. Following these instructions will help you safely assist someone using a concentrator at home or away from home.



Safety Warning

- **Concentrated oxygen can cause fires if near flames, a heat source or sparks.**
- Keep the oxygen at least 3 metres from any open flame or heat source, such as candles, a gas stove, or from anything that could cause a spark.
- Do not smoke or let anyone else smoke near the oxygen equipment.
- Avoid using anything flammable near the oxygen, including petrol, cleaning fluid, and aerosol cans or sprays such as fresheners or hairspray.
- Check that all electrical equipment in the vicinity of the oxygen is properly grounded (earthed).
- Avoid using electrical appliances such as hairdryers and razors and clockwork toys while oxygen is in use.
- Do not allow alcoholic solutions, oil or grease to come into contact with oxygen supply devices. This includes petroleum jelly.
- Make sure you have smoke alarms in your house.
- Keep the oxygen equipment clean and dust free.
- As the oxygen concentrator becomes hot when in use, locate it in a well-ventilated area, away from curtains or drapes.
- Have your oxygen concentrator inspected and serviced regularly according to the supplier's instructions.

Before you start

- Check that the equipment, including the cord and plugs, is not damaged in any way.
- Check that the nasal tubes are not blocked and that the inlet air filter is clean. The filter needs to be checked daily and cleaned weekly with warm water and squeezed dry.



Insert the nose inlets of tube (cannula) into nostrils.



Loop the tubes over the ears and bring down under the chin.

Further information

Contact your nurse or health professional if you need further assistance.
www.caresearch.com.au

www.lmrpcc.org.au

- Portable machines can be powered through:
 - a. A standard power supply.
 - b. A car – check you have a suitable adaptor.
 - c. Batteries – check there is an adequate supply of charged batteries.
- Make sure you understand what the correct flow rates should be and remember how to operate the machine. If you notice any problems during these steps – contact your nurse or health professional as soon as possible.
- When used inside check the concentrator is:
 - a. Close enough to common living areas so that the oxygen tubing will reach.
 - b. Sitting at least 20cm away from the wall and free of any curtains.
 - c. Placed on a firm surface and not covered by anything.
 - d. As far away from heaters as possible.
- Remove anything that could cause sparks or flames from the immediate area. This includes matches, cigarettes, electrical equipment e.g. electric razor, clockwork toys, oil or grease.
- Display a 'No Smoking' sign on the cylinder, or near the person using it.

Using the oxygen concentrator

- 1 First lubricate the cannula (the tube that goes into the nostrils) with a water-based lubricant, then insert into nostrils.
- 2 Next loop the tubes from cannula over their ears and bring down under their chin.
- 3 Adjust the clasp to maintain the position of the cannula at the nostrils. Change the nasal prongs as required.
- 4 Turn on the machine. It will signal a long beep at first and will take up to five minutes to get oxygen up to 95 %.
- 5 The concentrator can be left on safely for many hours but should be turned off if the person needs to move near flammable objects such as heaters.

After use

- The pump must be serviced every 6 to 12 months to make sure it is producing the right pressures.
- The filter needs to be checked daily and cleaned weekly with warm water and squeezed dry.

Reference: Royal Melbourne Hospital Home oxygen information, Version 10th Feb 2006

Frequently asked questions

Who moves the concentrator if the user moves from one place to another?

Family or friends.

What can I do for sore ears because of the tubing?

There are products available to pad the tubing – talk to your health professional.

Can a mask be attached to the concentrator?

Only if advised by your health professional.

What is the best treatment for a dry nose?

Water-based gels – ask your pharmacist for advice. Don't use anything unless you have checked that they are safe.

What do I do if the person's nose requiring oxygen is blocked?

- a. Use a water-based gel as described above.
- b. Adhesive strips will often keep nostrils open without need for medication.
- c. Contact your doctor or nurse if there are continual problems.