

Respiratory Physiology and Sleep

Home Oxygen Therapy Removal

Following an assessment of your breathing and oxygen levels, the results indicate that you no longer need to have oxygen at home.

Why don't I need it anymore?

During your assessment we took a small blood sample, which told us how much oxygen you had in your blood. This blood test showed that oxygen therapy will not benefit you at this time, as your oxygen levels were high enough.

If you are still suffering from breathlessness then this may be down to your heart or lung condition and not low oxygen levels.

Evidence has shown that oxygen will not help your breathlessness if your blood oxygen levels are normal. Being given oxygen when it is not required can be harmful to the body. In some people it can cause their carbon dioxide levels to increase, which can make you quite unwell. Your carbon dioxide levels were also measured during your assessment. Oxygen is a drug and can cause problems if it is prescribed for those people who don't really need it.

If I don't need it anymore then why does my breathing feel better when I use oxygen?

Psychologically breathing oxygen can calm your breathing. As you feel reassured, your breathing rate slows and you feel calmer, however your body does not physically need the oxygen.

You can become psychologically dependent on oxygen but when taught or given other breathing management techniques (listed below), your confidence can soon return and you'll learn to manage without it.



Patient Information

Another reason breathing feels better on oxygen is because you can feel the pressure or flow of oxygen into the nose or mouth, which makes the brain believe you can breathe easier. Again this is psychological and not a physical need for oxygen.

How else can I manage my breathlessness?

To overcome your fears, you can try to manage your breathlessness in other ways.

Your COPD/Respiratory Nurse or Physiotherapist will give you advice and strategies to help you manage your breathlessness. These may include:

- Breathing exercises
- Body positioning
- Anxiety management
- Using your inhalers/nebulisers in the right way
- Using a handheld fan on your face (this can give the same sensation as oxygen)
- Pulmonary rehabilitation programme (an exercise and education treatment programme to help you improve your fitness and learn how to manage your breathlessness better)
- If you smoke, get help to quit
- Drink and eat healthily and manage your weight

The British Lung Foundation have lots of information about and techniques for managing breathlessness; you can look on their website (www.blf.org.uk) or request a Breathlessness booklet from the Home Oxygen Team.

When will my home oxygen therapy be stopped?

Don't worry; you will be weaned off oxygen slowly. You will not just have it removed and be left on your own. If we find that you don't need oxygen anymore then we will discuss this with you. We will agree a second appointment with you to make sure that your oxygen levels are stable before we remove it. You can always ring the department for reassurance, or if you have any questions or concerns. You can also be re-referred to us if your condition changes.

Contact details

Respiratory Physiology and Sleep Department

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Tel: 024 7696 6734

Monday to Friday: 8.00am – 6.00pm

Sources used for information in this leaflet:

- NHS Primary care commissioning, Home oxygen Service Assessment and Review: Good Practice Guide, April 2011
- British Thoracic Society Guidelines on Home oxygen use for Adults 2015
- British Lung Foundation www.blf.org.uk Breathlessness leaflet November 2014

The Trust has access to interpreting and translation services. If you need this information in another language or format please ask and we will do our best to meet your needs.

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