

## **What you need to know about oxygen therapy at home**



*Long term oxygen therapy*



## **Beneficial effects**

- Oxygen is a medical treatment. It should be used in a secure manner and according to the recommendations of your physician ;
- Oxygen will increase your energy level, allowing you to maintain your daily activity more easily. It will increase your general wellbeing.

## **Risks**

- Oxygen does not explode or burn on it's own. It does, however feed the fire;
- In order to cause fire, three elements must be present: oxygen, a source of heat and fuel;
- When oxygen is added to a flame or a spark, the fire burns much faster and at a higher temperature;
- Your clothes and other fabrics such as curtains can accumulate oxygen and increase the risk of fire. This increased risk will remain for some time even after the source of oxygen is closed or removed;
- The oxygen contained in the tank, represents a great amount of energy. A broken valve on the regulator caused by an impact, can turn your oxygen tank into a missile;
- Your home must provide us with the necessary conditions for a safe installation of the oxygen equipment. Basic rules on hygiene must be observed in order to minimise the risk of fire. It is prohibited to store flammable products where oxygen is being used (ex: paint, oils, grease, solvent, rubbing, alcohol, etc);

**Please read the following recommendations that will allow you to benefit from your oxygen therapy in a secure manner. Do not hesitate to contact your respiratory therapist for any questions or concerns.**

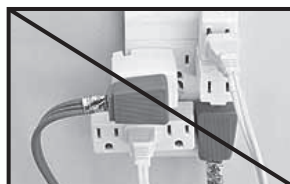
- For everyone's security, it is mandatory to display the «oxygen in use» sign in a visible area near the entrance of the house or the apartment. (This will advise the fire fighters and the people outside, of the presence of oxygen inside your home);



- Advise the Fire department of the presence of oxygen equipment in your home. You can reach Montreal's fire security services, strategic planning division at 514 872 3775;
- Place the oxygen concentrator in a dry, well ventilated area. The concentrator should be placed as far as possible from the kitchen and the bathroom. Make sure that the air entrance (situated on the back or side of the concentrator) and the air exit (situated underneath the concentrator) remains free of any obstruction wall, fabric, carpet cushion etc) at all times;

- Never store flammable products around you, the equipment or the oxygen tanks ;
- Connect only the concentrator to a single grounded electrical outlet ;

- Never use an extension cord except the one provided by your respiratory therapist ;



- Connect the concentrator on a sturdy wall outlet. Any loose connection may cause over heating and increase the risk of fire ;
- For your safety and the safety of those around you, it is strictly prohibited to smoke in the same room where oxygen is present (concentrator and tanks). Whether the oxygen is being used or not ;
- Smoking in presence of oxygen increases the risk of fire which can lead to damages or injury to others or yourself. Please take note that you can be held legally responsible for any injury or damages to others ;
- The « no smoking » sign must be visible to all visitors and fire fighters, at the entrance of your home.

## **When oxygen is in use**

- All flames such as matches, candles, lighters, oil burners and all appliances that can cause a spark (some electric appliances) must be kept outside of the room where oxygen is being used (1);
- Have a flashlight handy at all times in case of a power failure;
- **Always keep a distance of 10 feet or 3 meters between you and a gas stove, oven, oil or gas furnaces, BBQ, fireplace, wood burning stove, etc. If you absolutely need to use an electric stove top make sure to remove your oxygen first;**
- Keep concentrator, oxygen tanks and tubing, at a reasonable distance (5 feet or 1.5 meters) from all heat emitting devices such as electric heaters;
- Same security measures should be applied to recreational vehicles such as a caravan or a camper. These vehicles work on propane gas, fitted with burners that can set off a fire;

(1) Reported incidents include: smoking 73% stoves and ovens 10% candles 9% starting a BBQ or a gas stove 2% using a grinding machine 2%. Réf: NFPA journal January 2009. Risks are identical to the previous article prohibiting smoking in the same room

- Do not use oil, grease or petroleum product such as Vaseline, Vicks, Nivea, lip balm, etc., on your face. Allow other cosmetic or capillary products (hair spray), to penetrate before putting your oxygen back on. Favour water based products;
- To treat nasal dryness or irritation, use water based lubricant such as Secaris, Rhinaris or KY. These products can be purchased over the counter at your local pharmacy;
- Never use a hair dryer
- Never lubricate any part of your oxygen equipment with oil or grease;
- Never sleep with an electric pillow or blanket;
- It is your responsibility to send a letter to Hydro-Quebec, advising them that you have oxygen equipment at home. Hydro-Quebec will then advise you of any planned power failure and will give priority to reconnecting your electricity;
- Always keep your smoke detector in a working condition and have an all-purpose fire extinguisher if possible.

**P.S.** Notify your home insurance provider of the presence of oxygen equipment at home

## **Storage and transportation**

**The oxygen tanks contain pressurized oxygen. If improperly manipulated, transported or stored they can potentially cause serious injury or damage to the equipment.**

### **Home storage**

Please respect the following security instructions:

- Always store tanks in upright position in a well ventilated area (never in a closet or a junk room). The tanks should be placed in the base provided by the SRSAD;
- Only an authorized and specialized company can move your emergency oxygen tank;
- The emergency tank must be stored on its base and in a secure, easily accessible area;
- The regulator should be installed on the emergency tank at all times. The oxygen flow must be adjusted according to the prescription and the tubing and nasal canula must be in place at all times;
- Never place a cover of any kind over the oxygen tank.

- Open the cylinder valve slowly when you have to use it.
- Use a flashlight in case of power failure.
- Have a working smoke detector in your home and, ideally, an all fire extinguisher in your house.
- Never use alcohol, acetone, solvents or any other product containing inflammable products to clean the oxygen machine or its parts. Instead, use a clean cloth or a sponge slightly moistened with soapy water.

## Transportation

**When transporting cylinders, the most important consideration is how they are set. Cylinders not fixed or loose in a moving car can become deadly projectiles in case of sudden stop of the vehicle.**

### **The following safety procedures to comply:**

- If you drive a motor vehicle, the SAAQ requires to be informed and it is advisable to notify you auto insurer.
- Place the cylinders in the car with an opened window. They should never be in the trunk.
- Fix the cylinders upright in the support with the cover provided by the SRSAD. The cylinder on which is set your economizer must also be in the support. This support must itself be fixed with the belt of the car.
- Remove the cylinders when arriving at destination. Do not leave cylinders in the vehicle exposed to sunshine. The pressure inside a cylinder can rise and cause breakage of the cylinder when it is exposed to heat above 51°C.

- The maximum number of small cylinders that you can carry is 3 cylinders, including the one that is in your travel bag.
- If you must pass through a tunnel, the maximum number of cylinder that you can carry is 2 including the one in your bag regardless of size. In addition, you must be present in the car during transport.
- It is strictly forbidden to smoke in a vehicle that transports oxygen.
- Do not use a cell phone and do not refuel with gas while using oxygen.
- If possible, get an all fire extinguisher while in a car that transports oxygen.
- If you must carry your oxygen concentrator, it must always remain upright and firmly secured with the seatbelt in the backseat of the car.
- You can not carry the oxygen concentrator in a train, an airplane or a bus.

- If you plan to travel, talk first to your respiratory therapist. They will inform you about precautions and how to get oxygen outside of the territory served by SRSAD (Montreal).



- In any case, the equipment loaned by the SRSAD cannot be transported outside of Quebec.

## Notes

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