

## Using Oxygen Safely

There are important safety factors to keep in mind when using oxygen. Oxygen is a safe gas and is non-flammable; however, it supports combustion. Materials burn more readily in an oxygen-enriched environment. Also follow the instructions from your oxygen supply company regarding safe usage. Never change the flow rate on your oxygen from what your doctor prescribed.



### Keep Away from Heat and Flame

- Don't smoke and don't allow others to smoke near you. Post "No Smoking" and "No Open Flames" signs in and outside your home to remind people not to smoke.
- Keep sources of heat and flame at least five feet away from where your oxygen unit is being used or stored.
- Don't use oxygen while cooking with gas.
- Don't use any electrical appliances such as hair dryers, curling irons, heating pads and electric razors while wearing oxygen.
- If you wear oxygen while sleeping, consider using 100 percent cotton bedding which is less likely to cause static electricity.
- Always have a fire extinguisher nearby.

### Don't Use Aerosols, Vapor Rubs or Oils

- Don't use aerosol sprays such as air fresheners or hairspray near the oxygen unit. Aerosols are very flammable.
- Avoid flammable creams and lotions such as vapor rubs, petroleum jelly or oil-based hand lotion. Use water-based products instead.
- Never oil the oxygen unit, and don't use it with oily or greasy hands.
- Don't use alcohol-based hand sanitizers, unless you thoroughly rub them into your skin and let your hands dry completely before handling oxygen equipment.

## Store Oxygen Safely

- Keep your liquid oxygen unit upright at all times, never on its side.
- Don't store your oxygen in an enclosed space, like a closet or trunk.
- Be careful not to trip over the tubing. Never cut your tubing or use more than a 50-foot long piece.
- Never use an extension cord to plug in your concentrator or plug anything else into the same outlet.
- Turn off your oxygen when you're not using it. Don't set the cannula or mask on the bed or a chair if the oxygen is turned on.
- Keep oxygen concentrators several inches away from walls or curtains and never place anything over your concentrator.

## Be Prepared

- Have a functioning fire extinguisher and smoke alarms close by at all times.
- Losing access to oxygen can be very dangerous if you need oxygen continually. Make sure to have backup equipment (normally a large oxygen tank) and tell your power company that you have life-sustaining equipment in your home.
- Consider buying a backup generator in the event of power outages.
- Monitor the gauges on your oxygen equipment and give your oxygen supplier plenty of time to deliver refills.