

Going home with oxygen after coronavirus (COVID-19)

This leaflet explains about going home with oxygen and symptom monitoring when you are discharged from hospital. If you have any questions or concerns, please speak to the integrated respiratory team.

Introduction

You have been accepted as part of our coronavirus oxygen pathway. This is for patients who have been admitted to hospital with coronavirus and still need oxygen.

What does having oxygen at home involve?

You have been assessed by the respiratory team as being suitable for going home from hospital with oxygen. Before you leave we will have arranged for oxygen equipment to be delivered to your home. Oxygen is usually delivered by a machine called an oxygen concentrator which runs off the mains electricity supply. The concentrator takes air from the room and processes it into oxygen. This is then delivered to you through small tubes placed at the nose, or sometimes through a mask. A long piece of plastic tubing will allow you to use oxygen when moving around inside your home. The flow of oxygen will be set by the engineers and should not be changed unless you have been told to do so by the respiratory team. You will also be given a large oxygen cylinder as a backup for you to use in an emergency if there are any issues with your electricity.

Why you need oxygen

Oxygen is a gas that is vital to all of the cells in our body. Some people have low oxygen levels in their blood because of the effect coronavirus has on their lungs. It can take some time to recover, and oxygen will help if your oxygen levels are low. As your symptoms and oxygen levels improve, we will help you to reduce the amount of oxygen you need gradually at home. The aim will be to wean you off the oxygen completely as your oxygen levels improve. You will be contacted each day by the respiratory team and told on how to do this.

What you need to do

You will be sent home with an oxygen monitor. You should check this 3 times a day and record the numbers and how much oxygen you were on at the time of checking. Please make sure you have:

- been sitting down for **at least 15 minutes** before checking
- the monitor on for a few minutes before you take the reading (as it can take time to pick up a good trace).

The SpO2 number is the oxygen level, and the PRbpm is your heart rate.

The respiratory team will contact you to review your oxygen numbers and symptoms, and tell you what you need to do.

We would like your oxygen saturations to be 92-96%.

How long will you need the oxygen for?

It is common to experience low oxygen levels after having coronavirus. Oxygen levels can stay low for some patients, meaning that therapy will need to be continued. You will be reviewed by a respiratory specialist to check if you need to have it in the longer term.

Who will supply my home oxygen?

Home oxygen will be supplied to you by a medical gas company on behalf of the NHS. An engineer will install the equipment and explain to you and/or your relatives/carers how to use it.

Oxygen supplier: **AIR LIQUIDE** Contact, **tel:** 0808 143 9991

What to do if your oxygen concentrator stops working

Contact your oxygen supply company on their 24-hour number. They will be able to arrange replacement equipment.

Returning the equipment

You have been loaned this equipment as part of a local trial. The devices may be recalled if a decision is made by the clinical team that the equipment is no longer needed or the service is no longer being provided. You can also return the device if you no longer want to participate. Please make sure the device is returned directly to the integrated respiratory team by contacting us using the numbers below.

Contact us

If you have any concerns, please contact the respiratory team, **tel:** 07796 178719, 7 days a week, including bank holidays, 9-5pm.

If you are unwell outside these hours, please call an ambulance on 999.

For more information leaflets on conditions, procedures, treatments and services offered at our hospitals, please visit **web:** www.guysandstthomas.nhs.uk/leaflets

Pharmacy Medicines Helpline

If you have any questions or concerns about your medicines, please speak to the staff caring for you or call our helpline, **tel:** 020 7188 8748, Monday to Friday, 9am-5pm, **email:** mymedicines@gstt.nhs.uk

Your comments and concerns

For advice, support or to raise a concern, contact our Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS), **tel:** 020 7188 8801, **email:** pals@gstt.nhs.uk. To make a complaint, contact the complaints department, **tel:** 020 7188 3514, **email:** complaints2@gstt.nhs.uk

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