



Home Oxygen and Respiratory Therapy Program

Helping You Breathe Easier



Your VA health care provider has ordered respiratory therapy equipment for your care at home. This can be a brief or long-term need that you and your doctor should talk about.

VA has a service contract with a certified medical home care company. With the approval of your home respiratory therapist, prosthetic services will arrange for equipment to be delivered and set up in your home.

The technician must do safety checks and explain how to operate and care for your equipment we are providing.

A respiratory therapist will visit within 24 hours of you receiving home respiratory therapy services to see if you are doing okay and have any questions or concerns about your respiratory home care.



Home Oxygen Therapy

More and more people are using oxygen therapy outside the hospital, letting them lead active, productive lives. You may receive oxygen therapy if you are having trouble breathing. Oxygen can help lessen sleeplessness, headaches and improve mobility and mental ability.

The Prescription

A physician must write a prescription for oxygen therapy. Your physician will use blood test results that will indicate what your oxygen level is and help determine what your needs are.

Your flow rate:

You may have more than one rate, depending on your activity.

Flow rate for sleeping: _____

Flow rate for exercise: _____

Flow rate for normal activity: _____

NEVER change the flow rate without your health care provider's approval.

The Equipment

There are three common ways of providing oxygen therapy. Oxygen can be delivered to your home in the form of a gas in various-sized cylinders or as a liquid container. The third way to provide oxygen therapy is by using an oxygen concentrator. Each type has different advantages.



Compressed Gas — Oxygen is stored under pressure in a cylinder equipped with a regulator that controls the flow rate. Because the flow of oxygen out of the cylinder is constant, an oxygen-conserving device may be attached to the system to avoid waste. This device releases the gas only when you inhale and cuts it off when you exhale. Oxygen is provided in a small cylinder that can be carried with you, and in large tanks, which are heavy and are only suitable for stationary use.



Liquid Oxygen — Oxygen is stored as a very cold liquid in a container very similar to a thermos. When released, the liquid converts to a gas and you breathe it in just like the cylinder gas. This storage method takes up less space than the compressed gas cylinder, and you can transfer the liquid to a small, portable container at home. The liquid oxygen container vents when not in use. An oxygen conserving device may be built into the container to conserve the oxygen.

Oxygen Concentrator — This is an electrically powered device that separates the oxygen out of the air, concentrates it, and stores it. This system has a number of advantages because it doesn't have to be resupplied and it is not as costly as liquid oxygen. Extra tubing permits the user to move around with minimal difficulty. You must have a cylinder of oxygen as a backup in the event of a power failure. You should advise your electric power company in order to get priority service when there is a power failure.



Your Portable Oxygen

If your provider prescribed oxygen at 2 liters per minute and you used the standard (back-up) regulator on a d size tank it would last 3 hours and 27 minutes. This regulator comes with ALL HOME OXYGEN.

If you use the conserving regulator your same tank would last 10 hours and 21 minutes. The regulator shuts off while you exhale making more tank-time. When you inhale it delivers a burst and the 2 liters per minute. Conserving regulators are for Veterans who qualify clinically.

STANDARD



CONSERVING



Stay Safe Around Oxygen Equipment

Oxygen will **not** explode, but it will make a fire burn hotter.

- **You should never smoke while using oxygen.** Warn visitors not to smoke near you when you are using oxygen. Put up “No Smoking” signs in your home where you most often use the oxygen.
- Stay at least five feet away from gas stoves, candles, lighted fireplaces, or other heat sources.
- Don’t use any flammable products like cleaning fluid, paint thinner, or aerosol sprays while using your oxygen.
- If you use a portable oxygen system, make sure it is secured to some fixed object or in a stand. Use a seatbelt/safety belt in the car to secure portables.
- If you use liquid oxygen, make sure the container is kept upright to keep the oxygen from pouring out; the liquid oxygen is so cold it can hurt your skin.
- Keep a fire extinguisher close by and let your fire department know that you have oxygen in your home.
- If you are using an electric concentrator for your oxygen, contact your local power company for their power failure policy. Some power companies keep listings of patients with special needs. You may be directed to notify your community ambulance service or fire department with your special medical needs.
- Ensure your Fire Safety Valve is installed each time your tubing is replaced. This device helps fires from reaching the oxygen supply source.



You will be asked to sign a statement stating that you are aware of the extreme danger related to smoking around oxygen equipment.

Care of Equipment

The home medical equipment and services company that provides the therapy to you at VA's request will provide you with instructions on the care and use of your equipment. Here are some general guidelines for your cleaning procedures:

- You should wash your nasal prongs with a liquid soap and rinse well once or twice a week. Replace them every two to four weeks. If you have a cold, change them when your cold symptoms have passed.
- The humidifier bottle should be washed with soap and warm water and rinsed thoroughly between each refill. Air dry the bottle before filling with distilled water.
- If you use an oxygen concentrator, unplug the unit, then wipe down the cabinet with a damp cloth and dry it at least weekly. The air filter should be cleaned at least twice a week. Follow your home medical equipment and services company's directions for cleaning the compressor filter.

Care or Safety Concerns

If you have a care or safety concern you are encouraged to seek help from your local VA prosthetic representative. Every effort will be made to resolve the care or safety concern in a timely manner.

If the care or safety concern remains unresolved, you may contact the local VA Medical Center Patient Advocate in Albany (518) 626-6934; Bath (607) 664-4797; Canandaigua (585) 393-7612; Rochester VA Outpatient Clinic (585) 463-2653; Syracuse (315) 425-4345; VA Western New York Healthcare System at Batavia and Buffalo (716) 862-8752.

If the care or safety concern remains unresolved, you may contact VA Medical Center Management at Albany (518) 626-6731; Bath (607) 664-4722; Buffalo (716) 862-8529; Canandaigua (585) 393-7208; Syracuse (315) 425-4892.

If your issues continue to be unresolved through the management of the Medical Center, you may contact the Joint Commission. You may send the Joint Commission your issue by mail, fax, or e-mail. You can contact the Joint Commission via telephone weekdays, 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Central Time.



Mail: The Joint Commission Office of Quality Monitoring
One Renaissance Boulevard
Oakbrook Terrace, IL 60181
Toll-Free Telephone: (800) 994-6610
Fax: (630) 792-5636
E-Mail: complaint@jointcommission.org

Tips

- Don't use alcohol or take any other sedating drugs because they will slow your breathing rate.
- Do make sure you order more oxygen from your dealer in a timely manner.
- Do use water-based lubricants on your lips or nostrils. Don't use an oil-based product like petroleum jelly.
- To prevent your cheeks or the skin behind your ears from becoming irritated, tuck some gauze under the tubing. If you have persistent redness under your nose, call your physician.
- Do find out how long your portable tank will last so if you go out you do not run low.
- Call your VA prosthetic or respiratory therapist, 10 working days ahead, if you plan to travel a distance away from home and need oxygen equipment set-up/delivered.

Trouble

Call your primary care provider/team if you have:

- Constant headaches
- Blue lips or fingernails
- Drowsiness
- Confusion
- Restlessness
- Anxiety
- Slow, shallow, difficult, or irregular breathing
- Fever, chills
- Change in sputum color (yellow/green) or other lung infection symptoms.



Home Care

Respiratory care at home can contribute to improved quality of life. Your respiratory care practitioner can help you with your treatment, answer questions, provide instructions, and offer suggestions. Here are some tips to ensure that you get the greatest benefit from your respiratory home care.

Get Involved

Ask questions of your physician, respiratory care practitioner, discharge planner, and if necessary, your home medical equipment supplier. Discuss all the options that are available to you regarding your care plan. Provide all the information that is requested about your family and home situation to help your health care provider plan for your care.

Infection Control

Preventing infections can help you stay as healthy as possible. Hand-washing is the single most important thing to perform on a routine basis. Use soap and lots of warm running water. Work up a good lather and scrub for at least 15 seconds. Rinse well, with your hands pointed down to keep the dirty water from running up your arms. Dry your hands with a clean paper or cloth towel.

Your respiratory care equipment should be cleaned on a regular basis, besides washing with a mild detergent and rinsing carefully.

If you have a home nebulizer it is necessary to sanitize your equipment in a vinegar solution of one part vinegar to three parts distilled water. Rinse carefully and let the parts air dry on a clean cloth or towel.

If you use a metered-dose inhaler and/or a spacer, it should be rinsed with warm water and sanitized as directed by your health care provider.

These are only guidelines, and the specific directions for cleaning and sanitizing your home medical equipment is part of the instructions you will get from your home medical equipment company.



Patient Rights and Responsibilities in the VA Respiratory Therapy Home Care Program

You are eligible for VA respiratory therapy home care. In accepting the VA's assistance with equipment and expenses you agree to the following:

You have the right to:

1. Be given information about your rights and responsibilities for receiving VA respiratory therapy home care services.
2. Be given appropriate and professional quality home services without discrimination against race, color, religion, sex, national origin, sexual orientation, handicap or age.
3. Be treated with courtesy and respect by all who provide home care to you under this program.
4. Be free from physical and mental abuse and neglect.
5. Be given proper identification (name and title) by everyone who provides oxygen/equipment services to you.
6. Receive a timely response regarding any request for home care services under this program.
7. Be given privacy and confidentiality.
8. Participate in the development of your plan of care and be given an assessment and update periodically.
9. Voice grievances with and/or suggest changes in respiratory therapy home care services and/or staff without being threatened, restrained, or discriminated against.
10. Be given information concerning the consequences of refusing treatment.
11. Refuse treatment within the confines of the law.



Your Responsibilities in the VA Respiratory Therapy Home Care Program

1. Allow home care personnel in your residence for scheduled appointments/deliveries.
2. Be courteous to personnel providing the home care and keep scheduled appointments with them.
3. Keep your scheduled medical appointments for evaluation of the need for continued respiratory therapy home care.
4. Follow your practitioner's and home care respiratory therapist's plan of care and instructions in equipment safety/use.
5. Contact your local VA home oxygen coordinator within 14 days of your intent to travel out of the area. VA will do our best to accommodate emergency travel but 14 days is required for non-emergency travel.
6. Contact your local home oxygen coordinator if you no longer need VA respiratory services or equipment.
7. If you smoke and would like to quit, contact your primary care provider to request enrollment in a smoking cessation program.
8. **Patients on Oxygen **DO NOT Smoke** - smoking stops the benefits of oxygen therapy and is a fire hazard. Patients on oxygen must NEVER smoke while oxygen therapy is in use. Patients on oxygen are encouraged to quit smoking.
9. If you have questions or concerns about access to care, medical treatment, follow-up care or medications, after normal business hours, weekends, or holidays, please contact TelCare at: (888) 838-7890.

VA Respiratory Therapy Home Care Vendor

Apnea Care Inc.
1120 Youngs Road
Williamsville, NY 14221
1-855-672-7632

Getting the Support You Need American Lung Association:

(800) LUNG USA / (800) 586-4872

National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute:

(301) 592-8573

VA Respiratory Therapy/Home Oxygen Contact

Albany Stratton VA Medical Center

(518) 626-6430 or (518) 626-6411

VA Western NY Healthcare System (Batavia)

(585) 297-1080

Bath VA Medical Center

(607) 664-4622

VA Western NY Healthcare System (Buffalo)

(716) 862-7310

Canandaigua VA Medical Center

(585) 393-7296

After Hours Medical Advice Line TelCare

(888) 838-7890

Rochester VA Outpatient Clinic

585-463-2600 ext. 32523

Syracuse VA Medical Center

(315) 425-4400 ext. 52831 or 52830 or 53290

Caregiver Support

1-855-260-3274

For help with caring for a disabled Veteran

www.caregiver.va.gov

Health Information on the Web

www.myhealth.va.gov

National Call Center for Homeless Veterans Hotline

1-877-4AID-VET / 1-877-424-3838

TelCare

1-888-838-7890

24-hour, toll-free medical advice for enrolled Veterans

Veterans Crisis Line

1-800-273-8255 press "1"

www.veteranscrisisline.net

Veterans Service Contact Center

1-888-823-9656

For information on eligibility, VA health care benefits, enrollment,
or questions on your billing statement

E-Donate

www.visn2.va.gov

You can now make a donation online to the Veteran program of your choice

Reaching Us Is Easy

VA Medical Centers

Albany

113 Holland Avenue
Albany, NY 12208
(518) 626-5000

Batavia

222 Richmond Avenue
Batavia, NY 14020
(585) 297-1000

Bath

76 Veterans Avenue
Bath, NY 14810
(607) 664-4000

Buffalo

3495 Bailey Avenue
Buffalo, NY 14215
(716) 834-9200

Canandaigua

400 Fort Hill Avenue
Canandaigua, NY 14424
(585) 394-2000
(800) 204-9917

Syracuse

800 Irving Avenue
Syracuse, NY 13210
(315) 425-4400

Community-Based

Outpatient Clinics

Auburn

Auburn Memorial Hospital
17 Lansing St.
Auburn, NY 13021
(315) 255-7002

Bainbridge

109 North Main Street
Bainbridge, NY 13733
(607) 967-8590

Binghamton

425 Robinson Street
Binghamton, NY 13901
(607) 772-9100

Catskill

Greene Medical Bldg.
159 Jefferson Heights
Catskill, NY 12414
(518) 943-7515

Clifton Park

1673 Route 9
Clifton Park, NY 12065
(518) 626-5205

Coudersport Satellite Clinic of Wellsville

24 Maple View Lane, Suite 2
Coudersport, PA 16915
(814) 260-9342

Dunkirk

Valor Health Center
166 East 4th Street
Dunkirk, NY 14048
(800) 310-5001

Elmira

Health Services Building
200 Madison Avenue
Suite 2E
Elmira, NY 14901
(877) 845-3247 ext. 44640

Fonda

Camp Mohawk Plaza
2623 State Highway 30A
Fonda, NY 12068
(518) 853-1247

Glens Falls

84 Broad Street
Glens Falls, NY 12801
(518) 798-6066

Jamestown

608 West 3rd Street
Jamestown, NY 14701
(716) 338-1511

Kingston

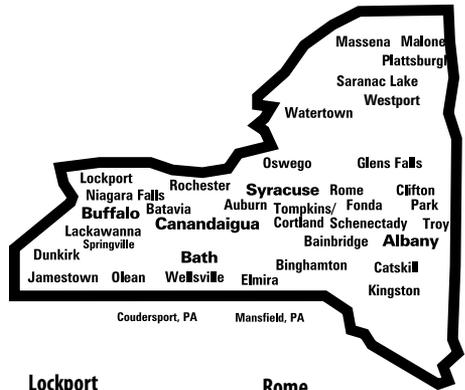
63 Hurley Avenue
Kingston, NY 12401
(845) 331-8322

Lackawanna

Our Lady of Victory
Family Care Center
227 Ridge Road
Lackawanna, NY 14218
(716) 822-5944

Springville Satellite Clinic of Lackawanna

27 Franklin Street
Springville, NY 14141
(716) 592-7400



Lockport

5883 Snyder Drive
Lockport, NY 14094
(716) 438-3890

Malone

3372 St. Rt. 11, Main Street
Malone, NY 12953
(518) 483-1529

Mansfield Satellite Clinic of Elmira

63 Third Street
Suite 104
Mansfield, PA 16901
(570) 662-0507

Massena

1 Hospital Drive
Massena, NY 13662
(315) 769-4253

Niagara Falls

2201 Pine Avenue
Niagara Falls, NY 14301
(716) 862-8580

Olean

465 North Union Street
Olean, NY 14760
(716) 373-7709

Oswego

437 State Route 104E
Oswego, NY 13126
(315) 207-0120

Plattsburgh

80 Sharron Avenue
Plattsburgh, NY 12901
(518) 561-6247

Rochester

465 Westfall Road
Rochester, NY 14620
(585) 463-2600

Rome

Griffiss Park
125 Brookley Road,
Building 510
Rome, NY 13441
(315) 334-7100

Saranac Lake

33 Depot St.
Saranac Lake, NY 12983
(518) 626-5237

Schenectady

1322 Gerling St.
Sheridan Plaza
Schenectady, NY 12308
(518) 346-3334

Tompkins/Cortland County

1451 Dryden Road
Freeville, NY 13068
(607) 347-4101

Troy

295 River Street
Troy, NY 12180
(518) 274-7707

Watertown

19472 U.S. Route 11
Watertown, NY 13601
(315) 221-7026

Wellsville

3458 Riverside Drive, Route 19
Wellsville, NY 14895
(877) 845-3247 (Bath)

Westport/Elizabethtown

7426 NYS Rte. 9N
Westport, NY 12993
(518) 626-5236