

Oxygen Use at Home

Your doctor has prescribed oxygen therapy for you. This fact sheet can help you to use oxygen safely and correctly at home and on the go.

Your oxygen prescription

Prescribed oxygen flow in
liters per minute (lpm) _____

Oxygen delivery type (for example, a cannula
or mask) _____

Company _____

Your portable size _____ cylinder will last
approximately _____ hours at the setting
of _____ lpm.

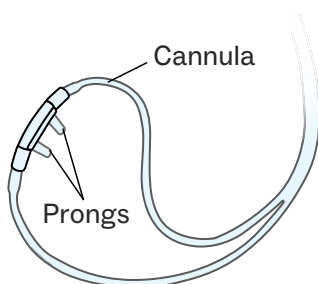
Homecare provider _____

Phone number _____

How to use a nasal cannula

Nasal cannulas [CAN-you-lahs]
are used to breathe oxygen.

The cannula is a narrow tube
with soft prongs that are placed
in the nostrils. Be sure to place
the prongs in your nostrils with
the curve facing down.



How to use a face mask

You may be prescribed a face mask to breathe
oxygen:

- **Simple face mask.** This mask is a small plastic shield that fits over your nose and mouth with an elastic band that is put around the back of your head to hold it in place. The mask has holes on the side to let the air you exhale go out and room air to enter. **Oxygen flow must be more than 5 liters per minute.**

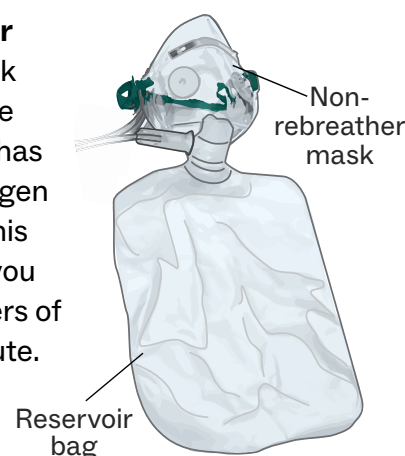


For your safety

Oxygen can be dangerous if not used correctly. Oxygen makes things burn more easily and can even explode. Follow these safety tips to stay safe:

- Keep your oxygen tanks (cylinders) away from **all** heat sources, including radiators, heat ducts, stoves, fireplaces, matches, and lighters.
- Do not allow open flames including gas burners or fireplaces, sparks, or burning tobacco in the room where oxygen is used.
- Use it exactly as prescribed by your doctor.
- **While using oxygen, do NOT use:**
 - Aerosols such as hair spray or paint
 - Oil-based face creams or lotions on your nose or face
 - Petroleum-based products such as Vaseline
- **If the valve post were to break off of a cylinder, it could cause considerable harm to anything in its path.** To prevent this:
 - Keep the cylinder you are using in a stand or cart.
 - Lay any extra cylinders on their sides and block them so they can't roll around.

- **Non-rebreather mask.** This mask fits over the nose and mouth and has an attached oxygen reservoir bag. This mask is used if you need 12 to 15 liters of oxygen per minute.



How to use oxygen cylinders

Be sure the flow regulator knob is set at zero (see **picture 1**).

- 1 Make sure the T-handle is tight and secure, to prevent leaks.
- 2 Place the cylinder wrench on the tank on/off valve, located at the top of the cylinder.
- 3 Open the valve by turning it counterclockwise one full turn. As the valve opens, the gauge on the regulator will show the amount of pressure in the cylinder. A full tank will read about 2000 psi (pounds per square inch).
- 4 Adjust the flow regulator knob to the flow rate your doctor prescribed.
- 5 Attach tubing to the nipple adaptor on the regulator.

How to change your oxygen cylinder

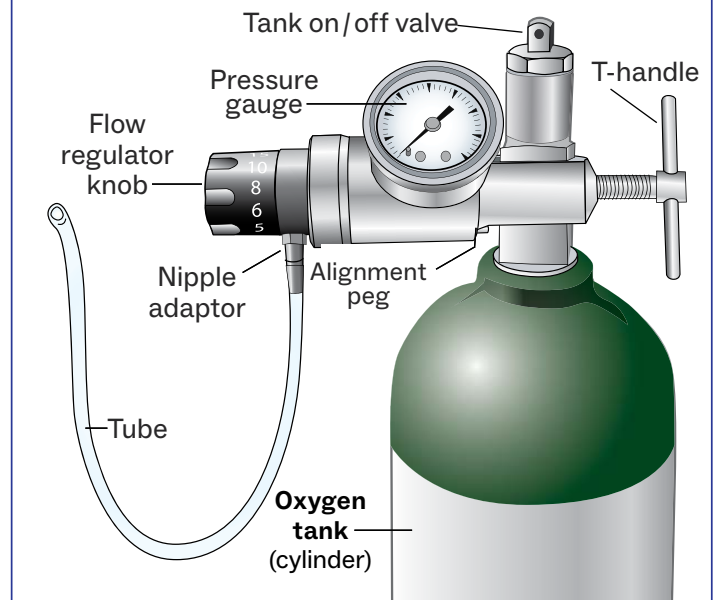
Turn off the oxygen flow

- 1 Using the small cylinder wrench (see **picture 2**), turn the cylinder on/off valve clockwise to close it.
- 2 Bleed off the pressure in the valve by opening the flow regulator knob.
- 3 When the gauge reads zero, turn the flow regulator knob to zero.

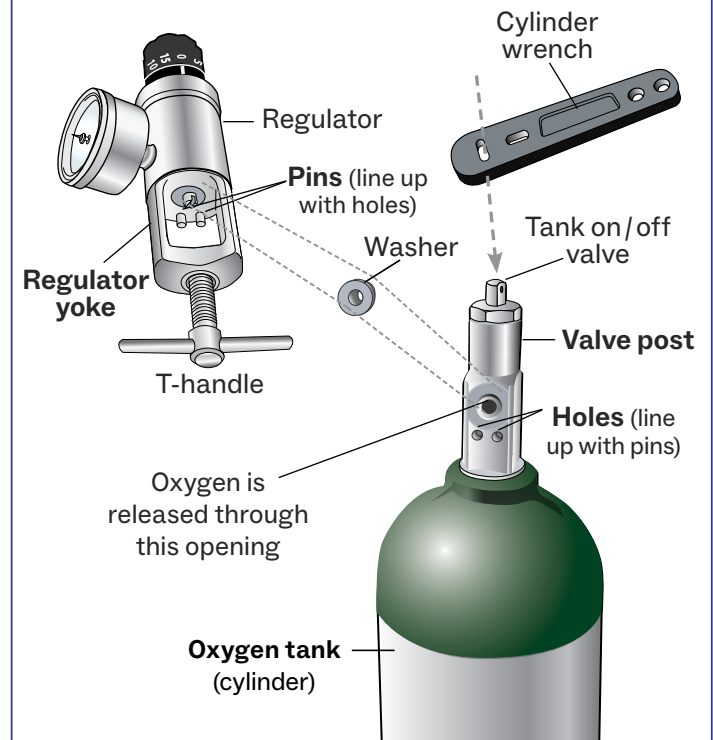
Change the cylinder

- 1 Remove the regulator by loosening the T-handle. Slide the pins out of the holes on the valve post and remove the regulator.
- 2 Remove the tab from the valve post on the new cylinder.
- 3 Make certain there is a washer on the large post on the regulator.
- 4 Attach the regulator to the cylinder by slipping the regulator over the valve post of the cylinder.
- 5 **Line up the pins** on the inside of the regulator yolk **with the holes** in the valve post.
- 6 Slide the regulator forward so the **pins** go into the **holes** (see **picture 2**).
- 7 Turn the T-handle on the regulator until it is tight and secure. If the handle is not tight enough or if the washer is not in place, the cylinder will leak when the valve is opened (see **picture 2** for where the washer is placed).

Picture 1



Picture 2



Learn how to turn on the oxygen flow and check the pressure gauge on [page 3](#).

Turn on the oxygen flow

- 1 Set the flow regulator knob to 0 (zero).
- 2 Make sure the T-handle is tight and secure.
- 3 Open the valve by turning it counterclockwise one full turn. As the valve opens, the gauge on the regulator will show the amount of pressure in the cylinder. A full cylinder is about 2000 psi.
- 4 Change the flow regulator knob to the flow rate number your doctor prescribed.
- 5 Attach tubing to the nipple adaptor on the regulator.

This gauge shows a full cylinder at 2000 psi.



When to change your oxygen cylinder

Check your pressure gauge often to make sure you don't run out of oxygen. Always check the gauge when the valve is open. When the needle gets to the red section on the gauge, it is time to change the cylinder. Change the cylinder before the needle gets below 500 psi.

Use the **Oxygen Cylinder Use Timeline** tables on this page to estimate how long you have until the cylinder (tank) is empty. The amount of time left in the cylinder will depend on:

- **The cylinder size.** An E-cylinder is bigger than a D-Cylinder and will last longer at the same flow rate.
- **The flow rate setting.** A higher number uses more oxygen. It is measured in liters per minute (LPM).
- **The pressure reading.** The gauge's needle will point to the pressure.

Oxygen Cylinder Use Timeline

E-Cylinder (tank size)

Flow Rate (LPM)	Pressure (PSI) in cylinder			
	2000 PSI (Full Tank)	1500 PSI (¾ Tank)	1000 PSI (½ Tank)	500 PSI (¼ Tank)
	Time left before empty (approximate)			
1/8 (0.125)	74 hrs	56 hrs	37 hrs	18 hrs
1/4 (0.25)	43 hrs	28 hrs	18 hrs	9 hrs
1/2 (0.5)	18 hrs	14 hrs	9 hrs	4 hrs 30 min
1	9 hrs 15 min	7 hrs	4 hrs 30 min	2 hrs 15 min
2	4 hrs 30 min	3 hrs 30 min	2 hrs 15 min	1 hr
3	3 hrs	2 hrs 15 min	1 hr 30 min	45 min *
4	2 hrs 15 min	1 hr 45 min	1 hr	30 min *
5	1 hr 45 min	1 hr 15 min	45 min *	0 min *

D-Cylinder (tank size)

Flow Rate (LPM)	Pressure (PSI) in cylinder			
	2000 PSI (Full Tank)	1500 PSI (¾ Tank)	1000 PSI (½ Tank)	500 PSI (¼ Tank)
	Time left before empty (approximate)			
1/8 (0.125)	42 hrs	32 hrs	21 hrs	10 hrs
1/4 (0.25)	21 hrs	16 hrs	10 hrs	5 hrs 15 min
1/2 (0.5)	10 hrs	8 hrs	5 hrs 15 min	2 hrs 30 min
1	5 hrs	4 hrs 15 min	2 hrs	1 hr 45 min
2	2 hrs 30 min	2 hrs	1 hr 15 min	30 min *
3	1 hr 45 min	1 hr 15 min	45 min *	20 min *
4	1 hr 15 min	1 hr	30 min *	15 min *
5	1 hr	45 min *	30 min *	10 min *

*** CAUTION! Replace the cylinder if it has less than 60 minutes of use remaining.**

How to travel with oxygen

When you drive or ride in a car or truck:

- Safely store oxygen cylinders so that they do not roll or bump against other cylinders or objects.
- Do not store cylinders in the trunk, or for long periods of time.
- Keep cylinders out of direct sunlight.
- Open a window a little to increase airflow.

Before you fly, check with:

- Your oxygen vendor.
- The airline. Airlines require a 48-hour notification when flying with oxygen. The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) has approved some brands of portable oxygen concentrators for carry-on use.

Precautions for oxygen use at home

- Oxygen must be ordered and also discontinued by a doctor.
- Oxygen should only be used at the prescribed flow rate.
- If you feel that you need more oxygen or no longer need oxygen, contact your doctor.
- Do not smoke around oxygen or anyone using oxygen.
- Do not use oxygen near flames or spark-producing equipment (for example, gas stoves, fireplaces, or candles).
- Keep oxygen tanks at least 10 feet away from any heat source.
- Do not store oxygen cylinders near any heat source (for example, a furnace or a radiator).
- Do not allow oil, grease, or petroleum-based products such as Vaseline to come in contact with any of the equipment.
- If you experience any problems or have questions concerning your oxygen, please contact your home health provider.
- Call your home health provider as soon as you arrive home.

Use this space to write down any questions you may have about your oxygen use or the care of your loved one. Discuss your questions with your doctor.