

Community Home Oxygen Service Referral Leaflet

What is Home Oxygen?

Home Oxygen is a treatment given to patients who have low oxygen levels in their blood. It can come in many different forms, such as from oxygen cylinders or machines called oxygen concentrators that run off your home electricity supply and can make oxygen on a continuous basis if needed.

Why would I need Home Oxygen?

There are some conditions (such as Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease, Pulmonary Fibrosis or Severe Heart Failure) that cause the lungs difficulty in getting enough oxygen into your blood stream. If this happens for prolonged periods of time your blood may thicken which puts an added strain onto your heart as it tries to push this thicker blood around your body. Home Oxygen therapy may help to reduce or even prevent this from happening.

Will Home Oxygen Therapy help me with my breathlessness?

Oxygen is commonly regarded as a treatment for breathlessness. This is often as a result of patients' experiences when they are admitted to hospital. Paramedics and A&E staff will often apply oxygen straight away and this may well continue until they are discharged from hospital. As this is often at a time when a patient is significantly short of breath (such as when suffering from a chest infection, pneumonia or fluid on the lungs), oxygen often takes credit for helping to relieve breathlessness.

Oxygen is used to 'top up' your blood oxygen levels if they are found to be low. Oxygen does not directly do anything to your lungs such as open your airways like inhalers and nebulisers can. Therefore, if your oxygen levels are okay to begin with, it is unlikely to be of any benefit to you.

Is Home Oxygen Safe?

If your oxygen levels are satisfactory when you are breathing room air, using additional oxygen can push your blood oxygen levels too high which can cause harmful effects. This is particularly common with Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease or at times of a chest infection.

Whilst the use of Oxygen may be entirely appropriate when you are acutely unwell in hospital, Home Oxygen is given without the benefit of continuous monitoring from clinical staff. Therefore you must be carefully assessed by an oxygen specialist team to make sure that the oxygen is needed, prescribed at the right amount for you using the most suitable equipment.

Oxygen can also catch fire if exposed to sources of ignition such as cigarettes, e-cigarettes, candles, cookers, grills and gas fires. Simple precautions can prevent any problems from arising however the safe use of Home Oxygen is the responsibility of the user.

Why have I been referred to the Community Home Oxygen Service?

This service will invite you for an assessment in order to determine your blood oxygen levels over a period of time. If you are found to have low blood oxygen levels you will be further assessed to find out how much oxygen you need. You will also be assessed in your own home in order to ensure that the equipment is safely stored and used.

This service will continue to monitor you whilst oxygen remains in your home and will also be ready to assist you with any issues related to your prescribed equipment or its use.

What will happen next?

You will receive an appointment to come to an oxygen clinic for further assessment. We will then be able to talk to you in detail about your condition and symptoms, assess your blood oxygen levels and determine whether Home Oxygen is suitable for you.

If you are housebound we can come to visit you at home however we will be limited in how detailed we can assess your condition.

Contact Details

If you have any further questions or concerns that you would like to discuss before your first appointment, please feel free to contact us

Community Home Oxygen Service
Boston House
Frog Lane
Wigan
WN6 7LB

Tel: 01942 482230