



## Why your Doctor orders oxygen?

Oxygen is ordered for you because of a test that was performed in the hospital or doctor's office that showed your Oxygen level in your blood stream was below normal. Oxygen is a prescription medication. You need to follow your Doctor's prescription for Oxygen just like you would for any other medication that he/she ordered for you. When your Oxygen level is below normal, especially over a long period of time, your body's organ systems are put under stress. All parts of the body need an adequate Oxygen supply. A low Oxygen level in your blood can cause you to become more ill. You will be short of breath even with the slightest exertion like walking; getting dressed, even talking can be a difficult task. You can develop CHF (congestive heart failure) because of low Oxygen levels in your blood over time. By following your Doctors orders for using your Oxygen, many of the symptoms you are experiencing can be lessened or in some cases reversed. So use your Oxygen and follow your Doctors prescription even when you feel like you don't need it. Only stop using your Oxygen if your Doctor tells you. Only change your liter flow if you Doctor says to do so, don't use more or less unless your Doctor tells you it is OK.



## Why did this happen to me?

Usually, but not always, people need additional Oxygen because of some kind of lung problem or heart problem. These conditions may require you to have additional Oxygen to maintain adequate blood levels for your body to function normally. Individuals that smoked for a number of years and/or may have been exposed to something in their everyday environment that has caused damage to their lungs. This is usually something that happens over a long period of time and people don't notice the changes occurring with their lungs. Many people think they are just "out of shape" where in reality they are experiencing the results of smoking, chronic coughing, and infections that have diminished the functioning of their lungs over the years. In most cases, once the damage is done, it can not be reversed. If you have heard the term COPD (Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease), this is what typically occurs with years of smoking and damage to the lungs.



**Checklist Reverse Side >**



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# How can I better live with my disease?

## #1 Stop Smoking!

## #2 Follow Your Doctors Order!

The amount of Oxygen in the air we breathe is 21%. Most patients that need additional Oxygen require 2 liters per minute while at rest. That is about 26%, so you see that isn't much more than what is in the air we breathe but it is enough to bring the Oxygen blood levels back into the normal range. By normalizing your blood Oxygen levels other body functions can start working properly again. If you exercise and do a lot of walking your Oxygen liter flow may need to be increased to account for the additional Oxygen need when you exert yourself. Some people need to have a different Oxygen liter flow when they sleep. The amount of Oxygen flow is always based on what your body needs to perform various activities. Other things you can do are:

- Use your breathing treatment medications as your Doctor ordered. Just because you may be feeling better doesn't mean you should stop or take them less often. Always check with your Doctor before making any changes yourself!
- Avoid public places or wear a mask during Flu season. Ask relatives that have the Flu or a bad cold to stay away or have them wear a mask when they come to visit.
- At the first sign of a respiratory infection (excessive coughing, yellow/green mucous) contact your Doctor.
- During the winter months make sure there is an adequate amount of humidity in your home. Dry air will make your mucous thick and more difficult to cough up. If you have a furnace humidifier or a free standing room humidifier, make sure it is working properly and it is clean. A dirty humidifier could be blowing bacteria back into your environment.
- In the summer time avoid going out when the humidity is very high and air pollution alerts are announced. Stay inside with the air conditioner on.
- Change your disposable supplies on you Oxygen system as you were instructed. (Cannula every week, extension tubing every 2months, and humidifier bottle, if you have one, clean it every week).
- Change your breathing medication cups every two weeks and clean them as instructed. If you use a "puffer" (metered dose inhaler) make sure it is always capped when you are not using it and you rinse it out periodically to clear out any debris or dirt that may have accumulated in it from being in your purse or pocket.
- Avoid eating foods that produce excessive gas. When you are bloated, it is more difficult to breath because you stomach is pushing up on you diaphragm and you can't take a deep breath. Eat smaller amounts more frequently instead of one or two large meals.
- Drink plenty of fluids, drinking water will keep you well hydrated and help keep your secretions thin and easier to cough up.

## Traveling with Oxygen

If you plan to take a vacation out of town, get permission from your Doctor first. Some things you may not have considered are, if you are planning on flying how do you get the Oxygen you need in flight and when you reach your destination?

If you plan to drive, what will you do for Oxygen?

Please call BLACKBURN'SI at least **TWO** weeks before you plan to leave.  
for your Oxygen travel needs.