Southwest Family Care Alliance

Oxygen Safety

Oxygen makes things burn much faster. Think of what happens when you blow into a fire -- it makes the flame bigger. If you are using oxygen in your home, you must take extra care to stay safe.

Make sure that you have working smoke detectors.
Make sure you have a working fire extinguisher in your home. If you move around the house with your oxygen, you may need more than one fire extinguisher.

Smoking can be very dangerous.
- No one should smoke in a room where you is using oxygen.
- Put a NO SMOKING sign in every room where oxygen is being used.
- In a restaurant, keep at least 6 feet away from any source of fire, such as a stove or fireplace.

Keep oxygen 6 feet away from:
- Aerosol sprays
- Toys with electric motors
- Electric baseboard or space heaters
- Wood stoves or fireplaces
- Electric blankets
- Hairdryers, electric razors, and electric toothbrushes

You will need to be careful with your oxygen when you cook.
- Keep oxygen away from the stovetop and oven. Do not lean over a lighted gas stove while wearing oxygen. Do not do any outdoor grilling.
- Watch out for splattering grease. It can catch fire.
- Do not blow out or get near a lit candle. Do not permit a cigarette to be lit near you.
- Cooking with a microwave is okay.

Other Safety Tips
- Do not store your oxygen in a trunk, box, or small closet. Storing your oxygen under the bed is okay if air can move freely under the bed.
- Keep liquids that may catch fire away from your oxygen. This includes cleaning products that contain oil, grease, alcohol, or other liquids that can burn.
- Do not use Vaseline or other petroleum-based creams and lotions on your face or upper part of your body unless you talk to your doctor first. Aloe vera and other water-based products, such as K-Y Jelly, are okay to use.
- Avoid tripping over oxygen tubing. Feet may get tangled in the tubing. Taping the tubing to the back of your shirt may help.
People on home oxygen therapy need to plan and practice home fire escape drills. Individuals, family members and medical personnel can assist in identifying the patient's physical limitations and assess their ability to escape from the residence on their own in the event of a fire.

Make sure the home is equipped with working smoke detectors
- Have the detectors tested at least once a month.
- Change detector batteries at least once a year.
- Special smoke detectors are available for the hearing impaired.

Plan two escape routes from each room
- Make sure the escape path is clear and remove any obstacles.
- Arrange for special assistance when there are mobility needs.
- Practice an escape plan at least twice a year.

Call 911 to summon help if needed.
- Keep a phone by the bed or favorite chair.
- Wear a medical alert alarm.

Do not permit smoking in rooms where you use oxygen.