



St Margaret's
Hospice Care

Dangers of using oxygen therapy



Oxygen

OXYGEN IS A FIRE HAZARD. PLEASE READ THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION:

Keep oxygen at least six feet away from flames or heat sources such as gas cookers, gas heaters and open fires.

Keep a fire extinguisher within easy reach at home.

Keep oxygen cylinders upright to prevent them being damaged.

Turn off oxygen when not in use.

When using oxygen it can be absorbed into your clothing and other penetrable materials. Any materials or items that have become enriched with oxygen will burn vigorously if ignited. High levels of oxygen can still be present in clothing, hair etc for at least 20 minutes.

Smoking and Electronic cigarettes (e-cigarettes)

Smoking around oxygen is extremely dangerous and may cause clothing and hair to catch fire and burn much more vigorously than in air. Never smoke or allow someone to smoke nearby whilst you are using your oxygen equipment.

To lessen the chance of clothing or hair igniting make sure clothes have been ventilated in the open air for at least 20 minutes before smoking or going near an open flame or source of ignition.

Electronic cigarettes include a power source, which is charged by a USB port or by using a separate battery charger. These items, when saturated with oxygen, may ignite. There could be a risk of ignition of an electronic cigarette whilst using oxygen.

Electronic cigarettes should **NOT** be used whilst you or someone near you is using oxygen therapy.

Additionally, batteries of electronic cigarettes should not be charged in the vicinity of a patient undergoing oxygen therapy or the oxygen source itself.

When using electronic cigarettes you should always follow the same safety principles adopted when smoking burning cigarettes.

Oils and grease

Oils and grease, or materials contaminated with oil or grease are particularly dangerous when mixed with oxygen enriched air. These items will ignite and burn quickly and violently. Please use the following guidelines when using oxygen:

- Ensure that your hands are clean and do not use any oil based creams and moisturisers when using your medical oxygen cylinder. This includes the use of oil-based lip moisturisers, make up and may include some prescribed creams/lotions
- If using alcohol gel, please ensure that it is massaged in well, particularly between the webbing of fingers. Allow time for evaporation to take place before handling oxygen equipment
- Do not use oils or grease with your oxygen equipment
- Use water-based products such as KY Jelly

Other hazards

Whilst using oxygen equipment, do not use:

- Hairdryers
- Aerosols such as hair sprays or deodorants
- Flammable liquids, such as cleaning fluid or paint thinner

More advice and support

St Margaret's Hospice Care

01823 333822 or **01935 709480**

crc@st-margarets-hospice.org.uk

Free NHS smoking cessation helpline

0800 022 4332

Lines are open Monday-Friday from 9am to 8pm and Saturday - Sunday 11am to 5pm, or visit the website **www.smokefree.nhs.uk**. Alternatively talk to your GP or nurse.

For information on general fire safety, please visit **www.direct.gov.uk/firekills**

Source of information: EIGA (European Industrial Gases Association) Safety Information website www.eiga.eu

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Please note all incoming and outgoing calls may be recorded for training and quality purposes.

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