

Because supplemental oxygen is an important part of your healthcare program, there are certain precautions to understand and employ to ensure safe use. Although oxygen is a safe gas that will not burn or explode, it, like heat and fuel, is a key ingredient for supporting combustion. Therefore, care must always be exercised in the presence of higher than normal levels of oxygen.

## Precautions

### Open Flame

Never permit open flames (candles), lit smoking materials or spark-producing equipment in the same room as your oxygen system. **Never smoke while using your system or any source of high concentration of oxygen.**

### Flammable Materials

Keep all flammable material away from your oxygen system. Never use hand lotions, hair sprays or other flammable aerosols or products unless you are 10 feet or more away from your system.

### Oxygen Tubing

Use caution not to kink the oxygen tubing or lay objects on it that could restrict the oxygen flow. Do not permit moisture buildup from the humidifier to collect in bend and therefore limit the flow of oxygen to you.

### Direct Heat

Never allow the oxygen tubing to make direct contact with stove elements, heaters or other sources of excessive heat.

### Location

Position your system in a location that is not only convenient, but also safe. Never locate oxygen equipment near radiators, hot air register or heaters.

## If You're Using Cylinders

Large oxygen cylinders can tip and cause injury. Make certain they are set into an anti-tip base and be careful someone doesn't trip and fall against a large cylinder and cause it to tip.

## If You're Using Liquid Oxygen

Never store liquid oxygen in a confined, non-ventilated area such as a closet. Always position it in a large, well-ventilated space.

Remember that oxygen in a liquid state is chilled to just under -300°F. Contact with either the liquid oxygen, cold gas, or with any frosted part of the system can result in frost burns to the skin.

Health Pavilion • 1150 E. Sherman Boulevard • Muskegon, MI 49444 • 231-672-4711  
Saint Mary's Campus • 200 Jefferson Avenue SE • Grand Rapids, MI 49503 • 616-685-5335

R 11/20 MD

To avoid spillage, keep the liquid container upright at all times. If a spill occurs, open windows and doors to ventilate the room. Should skin contact occur, immediately rinse the contact area with cool water.

## If You're Using a Concentrator

An oxygen concentrator uses electricity to draw in room air and create high oxygen concentrations. Avoid using extension cords with your concentrator to prevent accidental tripping. You can also refer to the section on electrical safety.

## Electrical Safety

If you're using an oxygen concentrator or other electrical medical device, the following cites the three most common problems related to electrical safety:

### Ungrounded Connectors

Electrical medical equipment uses a grounded or three-pronged connector. If your home is equipped with three-pronged receptacles, this equipment can be directly plugged in. Older homes have only two pronged outlets. Here, a suitable adapter must be installed with the third wire properly grounded. This is for your safety as well as the safety of the equipment.

If the adapter cannot be connected to a suitable ground, your home healthcare representative will inform you, and an electrician should be called.

### Extension Cords & Multiple Receptacles

The use of extension cords connected to multiple receptacles can easily overload electrical circuits. The result: blown fuses or open circuit breakers, disrupting your power. Of even greater concern, overloaded circuits can create excessive heat that could result in an electrically induced fire.

Refrain from using multiple receptacles. Limit the use of extension cords, and also be aware of the trip hazard exposed extension cords can create.

### Overload Protection

Many older residences may still have fuse boxes rather than the more modern circuit breakers. Should fuses "blow" due to overloaded circuits, **never insert a fuse that exceeds the current rating for that circuit.**

Should fuses or circuit breakers continue to open, remove some electrical devices from that circuit. In fact, it's a good idea to remove as many electrical items as possible from circuits to which medical equipment is connected. If in doubt, contact a qualified electrical contractor.