

Home oxygen therapy removal

Following an assessment of your breathing and oxygen levels, it has been decided that you no longer require oxygen therapy at home.

Why don't I need it anymore?

Your assessment has shown that oxygen therapy is not beneficial for you at this time. We can tell this from the results of your blood test, called an ear lobe capillary sample, which tell us directly how much oxygen is in your blood. Your breathlessness may be down to your heart or lung condition, not low oxygen levels.

Using oxygen therapy when it is not required can be harmful to the body. In some people it can cause an increase in carbon dioxide levels, which can make you quite unwell, as carbon dioxide is the waste gas that is breathed out from the body. These levels are also measured during your oxygen assessment blood test (as mentioned above). Oxygen is therefore only prescribed to those people for who have low oxygen levels and meet oxygen criteria. There may be more effective ways to manage your symptoms.

If I don't need it anymore, why does my breathing feel better when I use oxygen?

Oxygen therapy can calm your breathing, as you feel reassured, your breathing rate may slow down and you may feel calmer. However, your body does not physically need the oxygen. You can become psychologically dependent on oxygen but when taught other breathless management techniques (listed below), your confidence can soon return when breathing without it.

Another reason breathing can feel better on oxygen is because you can feel the pressure or flow of oxygen into the nose or mouth. This can make the brain believe you can breathe more easily. Again, this is a psychological, not a physical need for oxygen, as shown by blood tests.

How else can I manage my breathlessness?

We can refer you to the community respiratory therapy service who will give you advice and strategies to help you manage breathlessness, including:

- Breathing techniques
- Body positioning
- Anxiety management
- Using a hand held fan on your face (this can give the same relief as oxygen)
- Pulmonary rehabilitation programme

How will my oxygen therapy be stopped?

You will be weaned off oxygen over a six week period with support if required. The equipment will remain in place over this period and not be removed suddenly. Advice and reassurance will be provided, particularly in managing breathlessness as part of your individual oxygen removal plan. A blood test will be repeated to confirm oxygen therapy is not required.

Contact details

Lung Function and Sleep Oxygen Service
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