

LIVING BETTER TOGETHER

Unraveling the Mystery of Oxygen Use

Debbie Gianokopolous, RN
Northwest Community Hospital
Cardiopulmonary Rehab

LIVING BETTER TOGETHER

How do I know if I need oxygen?

- ▶ First and foremost – if your doctor has prescribed oxygen – please use it as he/she has directed.
- ▶ If you are in pulmonary rehab or have had a walk test – the staff may have evaluated your needs as well.
- ▶ Overall – if you are not able to maintain 88–90% oxygen saturation with activities – oxygen use should be considered.

LIVING BETTER TOGETHER

Remember –

- ▶ Shortness of breath **DOES** **NOT** = need for oxygen



LIVING BETTER TOGETHER

Shortness of breath \neq oxygen

- ▶ Shortness of breath comes from lung damage and the inability to move air. Think of trying to breath through a tiny straw – you are working very hard to get the air in and out of the lungs. *This equals the feeling of shortness of breath.* You could still have adequate oxygen levels even though you feel short of breath.
- ▶ What can I do about shortness of breath?
 - Inhalers or nebulizers
 - Pursed lip breathing
 - Pacing yourself with activity
 - Monitor your SpO2 or oxygen levels

LIVING BETTER TOGETHER

Measuring Oxygen Saturation



- A pulse oximeter is needed to measure your oxygen saturation.
- Adequate oxygen saturation should be above 88%.
- Supplemental oxygen may be needed if you SpO2 remains below 88% consistently.

LIVING BETTER TOGETHER

Don't let it get below 88%

- ▶ When oxygen saturation drops below 88% – the body begins to suffer –even if you feel fine.
- ▶ Your brain, heart, and other organs start to suffer from oxygen deprivation.



LIVING BETTER TOGETHER

What will work for you?

- ▶ There are many options available for portability.
- ▶ Determining what meets your individual needs should be addressed by a qualified clinician.
- ▶ Things to consider:
 - Flow rate? How many liters of oxygen?
 - Intermittent vs. continuous flow oxygen?
 - Portability/ Can you manage the system?

LIVING BETTER TOGETHER

Portable oxygen considerations-

- ▶ Can you manage the system?
 - Consider the size/weight of the tank.
 - Consider how long the tank will last on the liter flow you need.
 - Will I need to carry extra tanks or extra batteries?
 - Does it come with a cart or a carrying bag?
 - Can I travel with the system?
 - What is the difference between continuous flow and intermittent flow? Is intermittent going to meet my needs?
 - What will my insurance cover?

LIVING BETTER TOGETHER

What's the difference?

Continuous	Intermittent
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ This system delivers oxygen continuously.▶ The delivery of oxygen is not dependent on any breathing patterns.▶ May be preferred for those people that need higher liter flows.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ This system delivers oxygen intermittently or on demand.▶ The delivery of oxygen is triggered through a breath in through the nose.▶ It may also be referred to as a conserving device.

LIVING BETTER TOGETHER

Types of tanks -

Gas-cylinders Stationary concentrator Inogen portable concentrator

Helios liquid Sequal portable concentrator

LIVING BETTER TOGETHER

What about travel and sleep?

- ▶ Travel – Things to consider
 - Car vs. plane
 - Altitude
 - What can my oxygen company help me with?
- ▶ Sleep – Things to consider
 - Importance of night oxygen use
 - Can I use my portable concentrator at night?

A photograph showing three people sitting in airplane seats. A woman in a purple shirt is on the left, a woman in a grey shirt is in the middle, and a man in a light green shirt is on the right. They appear to be in conversation.

LIVING BETTER TOGETHER

Key Points-

- ▶ SpO2 of 88% or lower qualifies for home oxygen
- ▶ It is important to independently monitor SpO2 readings and maintain readings above 88%
- ▶ When selecting a portable system – make sure it meets your needs based on clinical evaluations and recommendations
- ▶ Know that intermittent/on demand systems are not for everyone.
- ▶ Do not use a portable concentrator for sleep.
- ▶ There is life after oxygen - you can travel and you can remain active - it is up to you!
