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# Safe Oxygen Use at Home

Oxygen is a safe gas when used properly. Oxygen will not explode. But any material that is already burning will burn much faster and hotter when there is a lot of oxygen present.

When your child is using oxygen, it is very important to follow the safety instructions below, along with fire prevention activities, so that you and your family are safe. Call Home Care Services if you have any equipment problems.

## Safe use of the oxygen system

- When oxygen is prescribed for your health, it is just like any other medicine and must be used as your healthcare provider has instructed.
- Keep the oxygen system at least 10 feet away from any open flame or heat source, such as candles, a gas stove or heaters.
- Never use more than 50 feet of oxygen tubing. This can reduce the amount of oxygen your child is getting.
- Keep the oxygen system in a place where it will not get knocked over.
- Always store the oxygen system in a well-ventilated area.
- Secure the oxygen cylinder at all times; put it in a cart or lay it down flat.
- Do not carry liquid oxygen in a backpack or other enclosed container.
- Never use extension cords with any medical equipment.
- Do not change the oxygen flow rate on your own. This can lead to serious side effects.
- If your child is using a concentrator, have enough cylinders to last 3 days in case of a power outage. Call Home Care Services for a 3-day supply.
- Secure loose cords, extra tubing, floor mats and rugs so that your child does not trip on them when using the oxygen system.
- Have backup oxygen tanks ready, and know how to use them.
- Protect against skin contact when filling the portable liquid oxygen tank. Frost buildup could cause injury.
- Check oxygen liter flow daily.

## Safety around your home

- Do not smoke or allow others to smoke in the same room as the oxygen system. Smoking is very dangerous when oxygen is being used in the home.
- Put “No Smoking” signs in the room where the oxygen is kept and near the entrance to your home, such as on the front window.
- Keep the oxygen system away from all spray bottles, including air fresheners or hair spray. These products are very flammable.

### To Learn More

- Children's Home Care Services  
425-482-4000  
Toll-free  
800-888-4420
- Ask your child's nurse or doctor
- [www.seattlechildrens.org](http://www.seattlechildrens.org)

### Free Interpreter Services

- In the hospital, ask your child's nurse.
- From outside the hospital, call the toll-free Family Interpreting Line 1-866-583-1527. Tell the interpreter the name or extension you need.
- For Deaf and hard of hearing callers  
206-987-2280 (TTY)

- Do not expose the oxygen system to home electrical appliances, such as electric razors, hair dryers and electric blankets.
- Call your electric company if your child is using an oxygen concentrator system so that they can make your house a priority during a power outage.
- Check that all electrical equipment in the area near the oxygen system is properly grounded.
- Have a working smoke detector and fire extinguisher in your home at all times.
- Do not use cleaning products or other products containing grease or oils, petroleum jelly, alcohol or flammable liquids on or near the oxygen system. These products may cause oxygen to be flammable.
- Make sure your family has a fire safety plan.

### Compressed oxygen in cylinders

- Store away from heat, open flames and electrical equipment, such as hair dryers or toasters.
- Keep away from flammable products, such as oil, grease, lotions or spray bottles.
- Smoking is never permitted in the same room as the oxygen equipment.
- Keep oxygen tubing away from the kitchen stove or space heaters.
- Large cylinders must be in an approved stand or chained to the wall to prevent them from falling over.

### Liquid oxygen systems

The instructions are the same as for compressed oxygen, with these additions:

- Keep the liquid oxygen system in a well-ventilated area.
- Keep the liquid oxygen tank standing straight up. If the system should tip over, put it in a straight-up position right away.
- Liquid oxygen is about 300 degrees below zero; frostbite can occur if skin comes in contact with the liquid oxygen.
- Never touch frosted parts of the system.
- It is normal to sometimes hear a slight "hissing" sound coming from the equipment.

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Seattle Children's offers interpreter services for Deaf, hard of hearing or non-English speaking patients, family members and legal representatives free of charge. Seattle Children's will make this information available in alternate formats upon request. Call the Family Resource Center at 206-987-2201.

This handout has been reviewed by clinical staff at Seattle Children's. However, your child's needs are unique. Before you act or rely upon this information, please talk with your child's healthcare provider.

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