

Oxygen safety advice in primary care

Oxygen is widely used in the community to help manage a number of conditions. Risk assessments should be performed by prescribers before the supply of oxygen is first made (via IHORM form) and at home training for the patient is delivered by BOC (oxygen provider) on installation.

Please share the advice below to help keep patients and their families safe and healthy.

Storage

Oxygen cylinders should be stored in a well ventilated place. Ventilation is required to ensure that in the event of a leak, gas is adequately dispersed and will prevent creation of a hazardous atmosphere. Cylinders should not be subjected to extremes of temperature. They should also be stored securely enough to prevent theft and misuse.

Oxygen presence should be considered in the event of a fire, and detail of any action to take around this should be built into standard operating procedures (SOPs). It is important that the oxygen equipment is not used anywhere near where there is an open flame or electrical heat source (fridge, heater, computer). A distance of 10 feet (3 metres) should be maintained between oxygen cylinders and a naked flame or 5 feet (1.5 metres) from an electrical heat source.

Smoking/e-cigarettes

The use of cigarettes and e-cigarettes is prohibited around oxygen. E-cigarettes are a source of heat, and carry the same risk of combustion as standard cigarettes, which can lead to fire and possible burns. Where possible patients who are considered for oxygen therapy should be referred to smoking cessation services, such as [OneLife Suffolk](#).

Emollient creams

These creams can be highly volatile in the presence of oxygen, and can ignite and burn easily. The risk should be considered before prescribing any emollient to a patient using oxygen, and they should be counselled appropriately. Always recommend water based products (e.g KY-Jelly, RoEzIt gel (OTC only)) for use around the nose and lips in cases of dryness with nasal cannulas. Hands should be clean and free of creams before use of oxygen equipment.

Formulary choices include:

<u>Drug</u>	<u>Fire Risk</u>
Epimax	Low fire risk
Isomol gel	Low fire risk

stored in a clean, dry area away from large quantities of combustible material, such as cardboard and paper, and any sources of heat.

Please note: This advice does not replace suitable information provision and training where necessary for storage and handling of gas cylinders. All personnel who are required to handle and store gas cylinders should receive suitable information and instruction regarding the hazards associated with gas cylinders and the gases being stored, and provided with the necessary skills and knowledge to carry out their job safely.