oxygen safety

Always use oxygen carefully. Oxygen is a safe gas when used properly. It will not burn or explode. However, it does support and rapidly accelerates combustion.

Here are some home safety precautions you should follow when you are using your oxygen:

• Notify the fire department and the electric company that you are using oxygen.

• Never use or store your oxygen near an open flame or heat source. It should be kept at least 10 feet away. (candles, fireplace, gas stoves, hot water heaters)

• Never smoke when you are using oxygen. Also don’t allow anyone else to smoke in the room while the oxygen is in use.

• Always have the “NO SMOKING” and “Oxygen in Use” signs posted in a visible place to let visitors and emergency personnel know that oxygen is in use.

• Do not use your oxygen within 10 feet of electrical appliances; especially stoves, heaters, toasters, electric razors, and hair dryers.

• You should be extra cautious that the electrical appliances you use are in good condition. An old appliance can potentially generate a spark which could ignite when exposed to oxygen.

• Do not use your oxygen in an area where combustible materials such as oils, greases, aerosol sprays, lotions, cleaning fluid, paint thinner, gasoline, or alcohol-containing sprays, or solvents are present.
• **Never** use oil-based or petroleum-based face creams, Vaseline, or ChapStick when using oxygen. Using these products actually burns or irritates the skin more. Oil and alcohol are flammable and could potentially ignite. **Use water-based products only.**

• **Don’t** use an extension cord with the oxygen concentrator and don’t plug it into an outlet that has other appliances plugged into it.

• **Never** place anything on the top of the oxygen concentrator such as drinks, plants, or books.

• **Never** place the oxygen concentrator against a wall, curtains, or in a closet when it is being used. Room air **must** be able to freely flow into the back of the unit.

• **Always turn your oxygen off when not in use.**

• Smoke detectors should be tested every month.

• Keep a working fire extinguisher within easy reach. Make sure everyone living in the home knows how to use it.

• **Never** leave an oxygen cylinder freestanding, lay it down next a wall, and secure it. Oxygen in the cylinder is stored under pressure and if damaged, it can become a missile and shoot off at a high rate of speed.

• Oxygen cylinders should **not** be stored in a confined area such as under a bed. Placement under the patient’s bed could be acceptable provided there are no bed coverings that would block airflow and no heat source is located under the bed.

• **Never** stack oxygen cylinders on top of one another.

• Oxygen cylinders should **not** be stored in an area where the temperature goes above 125 degrees Fahrenheit. **Never** store oxygen cylinders in a car trunk or a hot vehicle.

• **Always** “crack” the oxygen cylinder valves before attaching regulators in order to get rid of dirt and debris from the outlet port of the valve.