Home oxygen - information for patients and their relatives and carers

This leaflet contains information about home oxygen therapy and how people are assessed to find out if it will benefit them.

What is oxygen therapy?
Oxygen therapy is used for people who have low levels of oxygen in their blood, to bring the level up to normal.

What is the home oxygen assessment and review service?
This is a specialist service for people who need home oxygen. They will test your blood oxygen levels to decide if you need long term home oxygen therapy. If you do, they will decide how much oxygen and what equipment is best for you. They will visit regularly to check that you can manage your oxygen and equipment.

Why have I been referred to the home oxygen assessment and review service?
Your GP or nurse has referred you to the service to have your blood oxygen levels tested to see if you need long-term home oxygen therapy. If you have been unwell recently, your GP or nurse may have ordered a temporary supply of oxygen for you until the specialist oxygen service can do these tests.

Will the oxygen level in my blood return to normal?
If you have been unwell, the oxygen level in your blood will return to normal as you get better. It may take a few weeks or even a couple of months. You should gradually return to your normal level of activity. Try to do a little extra activity every day to help your recovery.

What happens next?
This depends on whether or not you need a temporary supply of oxygen before the home oxygen assessment team review you.

If you do need a temporary supply, your GP or nurse will order the oxygen for you. The oxygen supply company will contact you to arrange delivery. A technician will then install the equipment, show you how to use it and provide safety information.

If you do not need a temporary supply, your GP or nurse will refer you to the home oxygen assessment team. A member of the team will contact you to arrange an appointment in your home.
Will I always need oxygen and what if the oxygen level I am prescribed needs changing?
The results of the blood oxygen tests done by the home oxygen service will show whether or not you need long term home oxygen therapy. If the tests show that your oxygen levels have improved, you will be able to stop any temporary oxygen therapy and the specialist nurse will arrange removal of the equipment. If your oxygen level remains low you may need long term oxygen therapy.

If you did not have temporary oxygen therapy, and your oxygen levels are now normal, then you will not be started on long term oxygen therapy at this time.

Are there any risks?
Oxygen is highly flammable so you (and others) must not smoke whilst using home oxygen therapy or when near to oxygen equipment. This could cause fire and burns. Home oxygen may be removed if you continue to smoke whilst using or near the equipment. Oil based products (like Vaseline) should not be used as it is unsuitable for use with oxygen.

What will happen in the longer term?
When used as prescribed, oxygen therapy can prolong life and reduce complications from low oxygen levels in many people. The home oxygen service will monitor your oxygen use and support you to get the best help from it.

If you have equipment that you are not using, the home oxygen assessment team will support you to use it as prescribed. If this is not possible, they will arrange its removal from your home. You can always be referred into the service again in the future if your needs or ability to use the oxygen change.

Did you know?
The NHS pays a daily charge for each piece of oxygen equipment that people have at home – even if it is not being used. Please help us get best value for money for the NHS – if you have equipment that you do not use, let the home oxygen service arrange for it to be returned. Your GP can prescribe it for you again if you need it in the future.

Contacts
If you have any questions about how to use your oxygen or if you feel that you need reassessment: contact the Home Oxygen Assessment and Review Service
**HOS-AR 0800 022 3445**
If you have questions about the equipment, or need a new supply of cylinders contact the **Oxygen Equipment Supplier**: 0800 136 603

Useful websites
NHS Home oxygen website
SCCG Information for patients about starting home oxygen
Approved SCCG executive committee September 2016
Review September 2018