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# Using Oxygen Safely

Using prescribed oxygen can help you prevent shortness of breath. It can also improve sleep and mental alertness. And it can help you to be more active. But you must follow important safety rules when using your oxygen unit. This will reduce the chances of fire and other hazards. Remember these do's and don'ts:

## Oxygen do's

These include:

- **Do** keep flame sources at least 5 feet away from where your oxygen unit is used or stored. Open flames should be kept at least 10 feet away. This includes cigarettes, matches, candles, fireplaces, gas burners, and pipes. It also includes anything else that could start a fire. Never smoke or use an open flame when wearing oxygen.
- **Do** keep the oxygen unit at least 5 feet away from heat sources. This includes electric or gas space heaters. It also includes steam pipes, furnaces, and radiators.
- **Do** ask the oxygen unit supplier if you should keep the oxygen unit away from other appliances. You may need to keep it away from TVs and radios.
- **Do** turn off the oxygen unit fully when it's not in use.
- **Do** have a fire extinguisher nearby. Make sure you and others in your home know how to use it.
- **Do** be careful not to trip over the oxygen tubing.

## Oxygen don'ts

These include:

- **Don't** smoke. Don't let others smoke near you. Post a No Smoking sign in your home.
- **Don't** use aerosol sprays near the oxygen unit. This includes air fresheners and hairspray. Aerosol sprays are very flammable.
- **Don't** use vapor rubs, petroleum jelly, or oil-based hand lotion. These are flammable. Use water-based products instead.
- **Don't** use oxygen while cooking with gas. Ask the oxygen unit supplier about other types of cooking.
- **Don't** oil the oxygen unit. And don't use it with oily or greasy hands.
- **Don't** place a liquid oxygen unit on its side. The oxygen inside can evaporate. Oxygen should always be stored upright in a secured device.
- **Don't** touch the oxygen unit with wet hands from using an alcohol-based hand sanitizer. When using an alcohol-based hand sanitizer, rub all of the liquid into your skin. Your hands must be fully dry before touching the oxygen unit.