

# Using Oxygen: Tips for Cannula and Skin Care

The plastic nosepiece you wear for your oxygen is called a cannula. It may irritate or dry out your skin, nose, and lips. But there are a few things you can do to help.

Use a water-based lotion to soothe your lips and nose. "Water-based" means water is the first ingredient on the label. You'll want to avoid using any products that contain oil, like petroleum jelly, because this can plug the holes in your cannula.

If the inside of your nose gets dry, try using a saline spray. And the plastic tubing that fits behind your ears. If it rubs your skin raw, try putting a piece of gauze under the tubes.

Now, taking care of your cannula is also important. Wash the prongs, the piece that goes inside your nose, with soap and water once or twice a week. Replace the cannula every 2 to 4 weeks, or more often if you need to.

But if you have a cold or the flu, don't change the prongs until your symptoms are gone. By taking care of your skin and your cannula, you can be more comfortable while using your oxygen.