Your doctor has ordered oxygen for you because your health problem prevents your body from getting enough oxygen when breathing. Oxygen is a safety concern. If exposed to a spark, **fire happens in seconds**. Learn how to safely use oxygen. Your respiratory therapist and nurse will check your oxygen to make sure it works properly and teach you how to use it safely.

### Prevent fires from starting

- **Do NOT** smoke, use e-cigarettes, or light matches or lighters where oxygen is used. You are at risk for fire and severe burns. The Ohio State University Wexner Medical Center is a smoke-free facility.
- **Keep electrical equipment more than one foot away from where the oxygen flows to your face or breathing tube.** This includes:
  - Keeping equipment away from the nasal cannula or face mask.
  - Any equipment that involves a motor, such as electric razors and hair dryers.
  - Curling irons, heating pads, or other products with a heat source.

### Ask for help

- If you think your oxygen needs to be adjusted. Do not turn it off.
- When going to the bathroom to avoid falls.
- If you want to walk the hallways. We can get you a portable oxygen tank.

### Be comfortable and safe

- **If you notice an odor**, it is probably from the tubing or mask and is harmless. Oxygen is a colorless and odorless gas.
- **Choose clothes with cotton fabric** to reduce static electricity. **Do not wear clothes with nylon or wool.**
- **If you feel dryness:**
  - **Use Surgilube or a water-based product to moisturize lips or nose.** Petroleum or oil-based products, like Vaseline, Chapstick, or Blistex are more likely to spark and burn when exposed to oxygen.
  - **Use a humidifier** or water bottle to help with dryness.
- **If you feel discomfort**, such as sore from the head strap that keeps the oxygen on, tell us. Gauze or foam pads can be used to keep you comfortable.
What you can safely do when using oxygen

It is safe to:

• Use the nurse call button if it is one foot away from the oxygen flow.
• Use the bed control if it is one foot away from the oxygen flow.
• Change radio and TV stations.
• Use wireless remote controls for VCRs or TVs.
• Use telephones, cell phones, or smartphones.
• Use electronic devices, such as laptops, tablets, and e-readers.

Talk to your doctor or health care team if you have any questions about your care.

For more health information, contact the Library for Health Information at 614-293-3707 or e-mail health-info@osu.edu.

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