



*Better
Together*

Patient information

Oxygen Sensitivity / Oxygen Alert Card

Medical Division: Royal Liverpool Hospital and
Broadgreen Hospital

What is oxygen sensitivity?

Some patients with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) or other long-term chest conditions can become overly sensitive to medium or high doses of oxygen. This does not happen to all people with these conditions, only a small number. Therefore if oxygen is needed by these people, it should be given in a controlled way and monitored carefully.

You have been identified as being at risk of oxygen sensitivity. If you should become unwell, need to call an ambulance and you require oxygen it is very important that you are given the correct amount of oxygen on your way to, and in hospital.

Too much oxygen can cause a rise in the level of carbon dioxide (the exhaust gas we produce) in your blood and this could make you drowsy or slow down your breathing. Too little oxygen can also be dangerous, so it is important to get the correct balance.

When you arrive at the hospital the doctors will check your oxygen and carbon dioxide levels regularly and they will decide the correct amount of oxygen for you.

Your Alert Card

We have given you an oxygen alert card. This to make sure that doctors, nurses, ambulance staff and Emergency Department (A&E) staff know you are sensitive to oxygen, and they need to monitor you closely.

If your chest problem or breathing gets worse and you need to call an ambulance, please show your oxygen alert card to the ambulance staff and take it with you to hospital.

The ambulance staff and hospital team may already have a note on your records that you are sensitive to oxygen.

Your Venturi Mask

You have been given an oxygen mask, called a Venturi mask. This mask will give the correct amount of oxygen that is safe for you, and reduce the risk of your carbon dioxide levels becoming too high.

You should wear your mask in the ambulance and in hospital until your oxygen and carbon dioxide levels have been checked with a blood test in the Emergency Department (A&E). The hospital team may decide that you need a different level of oxygen after your blood test has been checked.

What happens in the ambulance?

Your oxygen level will be monitored, usually with a finger probe (oximeter) while you are using your personal oxygen Venturi mask. If the level falls below a certain range, the ambulance crew may ask you to use a different mask or oxygen given through your nose. The ambulance crew have been trained to manage this situation.

What happens if I am admitted to hospital?

As soon as you are admitted to the hospital, your oxygen and carbon dioxide levels will be measured and the correct amount of oxygen will be given to you. Your mask may be changed or the amount of oxygen altered depending on your needs.

How do I get a new mask upon my discharge?

As soon as you know you are to be discharged home, it is important that you get another mask to take home with you.

You can get a new mask from the Clinical Nurse Specialist or other team member using the contact numbers at the back of the leaflet. Ask the ward staff to contact them before you go home and arrange for you to have a new mask.

What should I do if I loose my oxygen alert card?

Please contact the Respiratory Clinical Nurse Specialist or Oxygen Assessment Team on the numbers below to arrange for a new one to be sent to you.

Instructions for use

1. Carry your card and mask at all times. This mask is for emergency use only. You may have a different mask or nasal oxygen if you use oxygen at home long term.
2. If you need to call an ambulance or you need to have oxygen whilst visiting your family doctor (GP) you should give the card and mask to the ambulance crew or to your doctor. They will treat you using the mask and the oxygen prescription on the card.

Further Information

Contacts and questions:

You may contact the following staff with any questions you may have:

Oxygen Assessment Nurse

Tel: 0151 706 2852 Via Switchboard bleep 4549

COPD Clinical Nurse Specialist Team

Tel: 0151 706 3310 via switchboard bleep 4645

**Author: Medical Division: Royal Liverpool Hospital
and Broadgreen Hospital
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All Trust approved information is available on request in alternative formats, including other languages, easy read, large print, audio, Braille, moon and electronically.

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