

# Smoking and Home xygen: What You Need To Know

The prevalence of people using medical oxygen in their homes is on the rise and supplemental oxygen – *a life-saving therapy for many diseases and conditions* – poses serious safety risks when used in the presence of smoking. Normally the air we breathe contains about 20 percent oxygen, while supplemental oxygen can contain up to 100 percent oxygen. While oxygen itself is not flammable, an oxygen-rich environment can cause materials to ignite easier and burn quickly.

## INCREASED FIRE RISK

Never smoke inside a home where supplemental oxygen is in use. Smoking while on oxygen increases the risk of fire. Once ignited, fires burn hotter and more rapidly in oxygen-rich surroundings. This leads to larger fires that are more difficult to escape and harder to extinguish. Sparks created from striking a match or lighter can easily ignite a fire while oxygen is in use.

## RISK OF BURNS

Even after oxygen is turned off, increased oxygen levels still linger on the hair, skin and clothing of anyone receiving oxygen therapy. If you use oxygen and insist on smoking, have a “Ten Minute Rule.” Turn off the oxygen supply and wait at least 10 minutes for high concentrations of oxygen to dissipate before going outside to smoke. This will reduce the risk of fire or serious burns to the face or body if clothing ignites.

## SAFETY TIPS

- ✓ Post “NO SMOKING – OXYGEN IN USE” signs both inside and outside your home.
- ✓ Never allow the use of any open flames when oxygen is in use.
- ✓ Keep 10 Feet from possible ignition sources:
  - Cigarettes, matches, lighters
  - Small appliances – electric razors, hair dryers
  - Pilot Lights – in appliances, stoves, water heaters
  - Heating Sources – furnaces, space heaters, woodstoves, electric blankets, wood and gas stoves, electric blankets, space heaters, gas grills, etc.
  - Cooking
  - Candles
- ✓ Always have working smoke alarms. Remember, smoke alarms expire and need to be replaced every 10 years.
- ✓ Practice a Home Escape Plan.



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