

High Flow Oxygen Therapy

Approximately 80% of CH sufferers find inhaling oxygen at 7 to 12 litres per minute very effective in dealing with cluster attacks. The oxygen should be administered using a **high flow** regulator. Most people find O₂ quickly aborts an attack. Some use it while waiting for other abortives to “kick in” - but most report that for maximum effect and quick relief it must be taken as early as possible at the start of an attack.

The time taken for O₂ therapy to be effective can vary, but most say they can abort an attack within 10-15 minutes: if not actually aborted in this time, the majority of people say the pain level reduces very quickly.

As soon as you know an attack is imminent, inhale the oxygen at between 8 – 15 litres per minute (adjust the flow to keep the reservoir bag on the mask inflated). We advise that you stay on oxygen for an additional 5 – 10 minutes after the attack has gone at a lower flow rate to reduce the chances of ‘rebound attacks’. If the oxygen has had no effect after 20 minutes it is unlikely that the attack will be aborted.

Your GP will need to complete a Home Oxygen Order Form (HOOF) which the surgery should fax to the oxygen company who will contact you direct to arrange delivery. Details of the requirements for the HOOF are attached. The oxygen company will supply the cylinder, complete with the correct flow regulator and non rebreather mask and tubing. If, for any reason, a mask is not supplied, OUCH (UK) can supply the correct non rebreather masks to **members** at £8 for two masks including postage and packing. Non members will incur a small surcharge.

Using oxygen can dry the nasal passages and the skin surrounding nose and mouth, you are advised **not** to use petroleum jelly or petroleum based skin products. A non petroleum based gel such as RoEzIt or KY jelly is suggested instead.

It is important to follow the instructions on the O₂ cylinder and please remember that Oxygen will **strongly support combustion**.

Do not smoke or use naked flames near it! For further safety advice, contact your oxygen supplier.

It is advisable to notify your local fire station that you will be storing Oxygen on your premises. You should also inform your home insurers that you store oxygen on the premises and also your car insurers if you carry portable oxygen in your vehicle. This will not affect your premiums but, if you make a claim and the insurers discover you did not declare you had O₂ on the premises or in the vehicle, they may invalidate your claim.

In Scotland the new HOTS (Home Oxygen Therapy Scheme) is not in operation, in which case your GP will continue to write a prescription for a 1360 litre AF cylinder for which you will need a high flow regulator (high flow regulators are not available on the NHS). OUCH (UK) *may* be able to help Scottish members to source a regulator. We are working with the health agencies in Scotland to improve the Home Oxygen Therapy Service for sufferers and are making some headway.

Finally it is very useful to have feedback on how you found the treatment. Keep us informed via our message board or by writing to us.

OUCH (UK) 24 Hour help-line: 01646 651 979