



SAFETY IN THE HOME

Safety in the Home for the Patient and Caregivers

Safety in the home is of utmost importance to the patient and their caregivers. The following guidelines may be helpful as you ensure a safe environment for the patient:

Handwashing

- Thorough and frequent hand washing is the best way to keep the patient, caregivers, and family members safe. Get in the habit of washing your hands vigorously for at least 15-20 seconds with soap and water. Wash before and after eating, before and after touching your nose and/or mouth, after using the toilet, after smoking, after handling pets, and **always before and after patient care**. **Frequent hand washing is the number one way we can all stop the spread of infections!**

Oxygen Safety

- Place a “NO SMOKING” sign on the doors leading into your home. The equipment company that brings the oxygen equipment can provide these signs.
- If anyone is going to smoke you must do these things first:
 - Remove the oxygen mask or tubing from the patient’s face.
 - Turn off the oxygen machine or tank completely.
 - Wait 30 minutes before smoking. Oxygen may remain in or on the body and clothing and can cause a fire even if the oxygen equipment has been turned off.
- Avoid petroleum-based products. Use only water-based products for skin care. This includes lip balm, face and body lotion and hair products.
- Keep tubing as short as possible to increase the amount of oxygen the patient receives.
- Do not use aerosol sprays near oxygen equipment.
- Do not lubricate or clean equipment with oil, grease or chemical products.
- Place the oxygen machine (concentrator) on a carpet, rug, or some type of thick pad to reduce the noise.
- Handle oxygen canisters carefully and store them in an upright position in the cart or holder supplied. Oxygen canisters have very high pressure and can become dangerous if dropped.
- Do not store or use oxygen within 10 feet of an open flame. Open flames and potential fire sources include such items as candles, stoves, matches, cigarettes, heaters, cooking devices and fireplaces.
- Be sure you have a working smoke detector, a working fire extinguisher, and a plan of escape in case of fire
- Make sure that your guests and visitors are aware you have oxygen and follow all of the above safety rules.



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Trying to Prevent Falls

Avoiding injury is very important to your Care Team. Your nurse will pay attention to particular things, such as medications and weakness, and help you work on ways to try to prevent falls.

Here are some things you should address to reduce risks of falling inside your home:

- Slippery floors, loose area or throw rugs
- Dark or dim lighting that makes it difficult to see
- Stairs without railings or loose carpeting on steps
- Bathtubs, showers and toilets without grab bars
- Clutter than can be hard to walk around and easy to trip over (for example, stacks of newspapers and magazines)
- Hard to reach items in high locations (the top shelf of a cabinet)
- Electrical cord, phone cords or Oxygen tubing
- Consider a bedside commode beside the bed rather walking to the bathroom, especially at night
- Consider routine toileting to prevent any sudden urges to rush to bathroom

Here are some things you should address to reduce risks of falling outside your home:

- Slippery sidewalks, walkways, driveways from ice or snow
- Wearing shoes or boots with little or no traction
- Entrances, walkways and garages with poor lighting
- Walkways that have become uneven with age (like those made of brick)

Need more information or help? Call 633-3400 24 hours a day, 7 days a week to get live help. Thank you for letting us help care for you and your loved ones.