

# Going home on oxygen

Information and advice for parents and carers

## Neonatal

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Some babies will need more help with their breathing than others and they will need to go home on oxygen. This means their breathing will be supported by additional oxygen that can be used at home whilst being cared for by family/carers. You will receive full training and be competent prior to your baby going home and be supported by the neonatal unit and Neonatal Community Outreach Team (NCOT).

### What is home oxygen?

Each baby requires differing amounts of oxygen for varying lengths of time and it is important they receive the correct amount of oxygen for their growth and development. NCOT and the staff on the neonatal unit will help you prepare for your babies discharge home and will ensure you feel confident in caring for them with oxygen.

Before you go home, you will have a discharge planning meeting which will include healthcare professionals involved in your baby's care, where they will plan for your baby to go home on oxygen.

We will also:

- Discuss home oxygen and what this involves for you as a family at home
- Provide you with all the necessary equipment and training
- Ensure your competencies are completed and you fully understand the care delivery and safety that is required for home oxygen. This will include your Basic Life Support training and discuss how to reduce the risk of SIDS (Sudden Infant Deaths), all inclusive within the STORK programme
- Arrange for Baywater to install the home oxygen when you will be at home to receive your training and cylinders safely
- Ensure you have an Open Access letter for your local paediatric unit for you to call for out of hours advice/admission
- Visit you at least once a week at home to support you in the care of your baby and to empower you to complete sleep studies, whilst you care for your baby at home with oxygen

Your oxygen supplier will tell your gas and electricity supplier that you are storing oxygen in the home. This is important so that they can prioritise you if there is a power cut in the home.

## **Preparation for going home**

When a decision has been made for your baby to go home on oxygen they will have an overnight sleep study performed. This will involve attaching an oxygen saturation monitor to baby's foot and recording the oxygen levels for 8 hours minimum and then the team can then work out how much oxygen is needed at home.

The Neonatal Outreach Team will arrange a suitable date with you to complete a home safety assessment and once this is complete the oxygen can be ordered and delivery arranged.

Oxygen in the home is provided using oxygen cylinders and we normally arrange to have 1 downstairs and 1 upstairs (with spares). We will also arrange for 2 – 4 small portable cylinders which you can carry in a backpack or on the pushchair when away from home.

## **Baywater**

The Baywater engineer will visit your home and set up the equipment and talk you through its use. To re-order cylinders contact Baywater on: 0800 373580

## **Safety at home**

- KEEP cylinders at least 5 feet away from extreme heat and cold sources
- Cylinders must be 10 feet away from an open fire
- DO NOT smoke, use e-cigarettes or naked flames anywhere near the cylinder
- Turn OFF cylinders when not in use
- DO NOT use oil or grease on the skin, such as Vaseline or petroleum gel. Ensure any lotions or creams are water based by checking the ingredients on the packaging prior to use
- Store away from flammable, oil based products (e.g. candles, cigarette lighters)
- Ensure cylinders are firmly secured and cannot be knocked over and please lay them flat when they are not in use

## **How will you monitor your baby at home?**

You will be discharged home, with NCOT support, once you have fully completed your oxygen competencies. These allow you to care for your baby at home, ensuring their safety is paramount at all times.

You will be educated on how to recognise when your baby may require further assistance with their breathing and signs/symptoms.

If you have a non-urgent query, do not hesitate to contact the NCOT for support and advice.

You will need to:

- Inform your house insurer/landlord of home oxygen
- Inform your car insurance provider
- Apply for Blue Badge parking
- Contact Fire Service for FREE fire safety check on your home. [www.fireservice.co.uk](http://www.fireservice.co.uk)

## **How will the home oxygen be monitored?**

We will come to see you and your baby at least once a week to check their oxygen saturations and offer further support, if required.

To ensure your baby is receiving the correct amount of oxygen we will carry out a sleep study (the same as they had before they left hospital) at home, with your support, at least every 3-4 weeks.

We will bring over the sleep study monitor and equipment and show you how to use it and document for the study. We will not do a sleep study if your baby has been unwell or recently received their immunisations, so please ensure you let our team know prior to our visit.

## **Going outside**

Some parents do worry about going outside with their baby on oxygen, especially as there is a lot of equipment to move about, but you will have a supply of portable oxygen to do this.

Portable oxygen is prescribed with the oxygen supply requested for use inside your home. Portable cylinders will come with a carry bag to make it easier to travel in the pushchair or car.

Before you leave the house always remember to check the oxygen flow and contents of your portable oxygen supply and that there is enough supply for your trip.

If you use public transport or taxis please ensure you have checked they are happy to for you to travel with them as some transport companies may not take oxygen on board.

Travelling oxygen cylinders should be stored securely in the car, either behind the front seat or fastened with a seat belt in the rear seat. Extra cylinders should be stored in the boot and NEVER use oxygen in a fuel station.

## **Contact Phone Numbers**

### **Neonatal Outreach Team**

7 days a week, excluding bank holidays 08.00 – 17.00

Mobile: 07870384017

**SWB Neonatal Unit:** 0121 507 5100

**Baywater Healthcare:** 0800 373580

You will have Open Access to the local paediatric ward, so please call the number highlighted on your Open Access letter.

If your babies condition worsens please call your GP or 999 and do not wait for your next NCOT visit.

## Further Reading

BLISS (2025). Going home on Oxygen. [Online]. London: Bliss. Available from: <https://www.bliss.org.uk/parents/going-home-from-the-neonatal-unit/going-home-on-oxygen> [Accessed 4 March 2025].

BLISS (2025). Travelling home from the neonatal unit. [Online]. London: Bliss. Available from: <https://www.bliss.org.uk/parents/going-home-from-the-neonatal-unit/preparing-to-go-home-from-the-neonatal-unit/travelling-home-from-the-neonatal-unit> [Accessed 4 March 2025].

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