



NHOPA NEWS

National Home Oxygen Patients Association

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Miscellaneous Musing for the New Year

Oxygen & Smoking

Recently NHOPA received a question regarding the use of oxygen while smoking. NHOPA's response is provided to support our position and to encourage our members to protect themselves with oxygen around open flames.

NHOPA does not advocate nor support the use of oxygen around an open flame - it is a disaster waiting to happen. On the website www.portableoxygen.org, Pete Wilson talks about his "five-foot rule" that says that you should keep a minimum five-foot distance between oxygen and an ignition source. Pete states that "I keep my concentrator and store both liquid and compressed oxygen containers at least five feet from any source of flames or spark." The critical problem with using a nasal cannula for delivery of supplementary oxygen is that not all of it goes into the person's body. The oxygen may saturate clothing around the person's upper body and hair; if one comes to close to a flame there is a high possibility that the person's hair and clothing may catch on fire with deadly results.

Smoking while using oxygen is an absolute contraindication and can be potentially life threatening to both patients and caregivers. This threat is two fold: first and second hand smoke inhalation and the real threat of fires caused by smoking around an open flame.

In order to maintain a safe environment with oxygen, as has been stated, oxygen should not be used around any open flames. While oxygen is not flammable, it does support combustion and is classified as an accelerant.

Check out Pete Wilson's site; it contains several stories and guidelines regarding patients and smoking. The link is: (<http://www.portableoxygen.org/o2safety.html#fire>)

If you still smoke, make it your New Year's resolution to stop, protecting yourself and your loved ones.

Federal Oxygen Regulation Updates

NHOPA received information on the status of a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM) that was originally published on September 7, 2005. This NPRM is to amend its rule implementing the Air Carrier Access Act (ACAA). This NPRM proposes to provide greater accommodations for persons with respiratory disabilities by requiring U.S. and foreign air carriers operating to and from the U.S. to test four types of electronic respiratory assistive devices for electromagnetic interference, permit their use during all phases of commercial flight if safe, and provide passengers free in-flight medical oxygen in accordance with applicable safety rules. The DOT is in the process of reviewing the comments received and they expect to issue a complete rulemaking on the pending proposed rule on or about March 2008.

CMS recently announced a second round of **competitive bidding** in 70 cities. Many users may find themselves seeking new providers and other choices. There is a non-discrimination clause in the competitive bidding regulations stating that the same equipment must be offered to everyone. The list of cities can be found at [/www.cms.hhs.gov/competitiveacqfordmepos/](http://www.cms.hhs.gov/competitiveacqfordmepos/)

Airlines & Oxygen

Pam Jackson from SeQual notified NHOPA that US Airways recently included the SeQual Eclipse on their list of approved POCs aboard their aircraft. Other approved POCs for US Airways are: Inogen One, Airsep Lifestyle, and Airsep Freestyle models.

Holly Lockwood informed us that Delta and Alaska Air have begun to charge a non-refundable medical screening fee. This fee will

include those persons traveling with portable oxygen concentrators (POCs) on these carriers. Delta is charging \$25 while Alaska is charging \$50.

Lower Medication Costs During a Coverage Gap

- Switch to generics or other lower-cost drugs
- Explore national and community-based charitable programs such as the National Patient Advocate Foundation for Rare Disorders.
- Look into pharmaceutical assistance programs (www.needymeds.com)
- Look at state pharmaceutical assistance programs available in 21 states.
- Apply for extra help at www.socialsecurity.gov or call 800-772-1213

Taken from NEED MAG Source: Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services web site. Medicare and you, 2007. Available at: www.medicare.gov/publications/pubs/pdf/10050.pdf

Reader Feedback

Swimming with Oxygen (Nov 2007)

Hazel Horti, long time reader of NHOPA News wrote "I have been swimming laps with oxygen for 6 years. [My Companion 500] sits in a wheeled cart that I park at the side of the pool half way between the deep and shallow ends. My 35 foot hose floats after me. Only once has the cart tipped over (not into the pool) when I

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The National Home Oxygen Patients Association is devoted exclusively to improving the lives of people across the country who require supplementary oxygen on a regular basis.

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tugged too sharply on the hose. Now, I straighten the tubing out gently before reversing my course and have had no problem with tipping."

Peter Ewald wrote "I am 'working out' in a pool at [local gym] in Porter's Neck, NC as follows: I only walk laps in the water. To this end I took a small Styrofoam cooler, put my Helios unit on #3 and set it in the cooler. I braced it with the top of the cooler after cutting the top into pieces. It pushes very easily and I get some exercise. I push it ahead of me as I do my walking laps."

Hazel and Peter thanks for your feedback on swimming and exercising with oxygen.

Pulse Oximeters (Nov 2007)

Patricia L. Blackwell, RN wrote "Just received the newsletter. In response to questions about pulse oximeters, it is true that you need a prescription to purchase one that the MDs. use, BUT Nonin also makes one that mountain climbers use. One that does not require a prescription. It is the "SportStat" Pulse Oximeter and can be purchased at stores that carry mountain climbing supplies, (i.e. REI)."

Patricia thanks for the follow-up information.

Carpet Cleaner Chemicals

Connie Stripling wrote in follow-up to commercial carpet cleaners: "I found one carpet cleaner whose chemicals do not choke me: Chem Dry at 1-888-797-0777. They have been advertising for some time but I didn't believe it until my daughter-in-law used them and guaranteed that there were no detectable fumes and that it really did dry in two hours. My grandkids can now come over and visit again."

Connie thanks for the follow-up. As a reminder, NHOPA does not specifically endorse ANY products. This is provided for informational purposes only.

OxyView Glasses

Mereth Meade, a new member of NHOPA wrote regarding the OxyView glasses. "For those who wear glass all day, along with a cannula, I'd like to tell you about the liberation I've experienced by wearing glasses which channel the oxygen right through the temples of spectacles.

Oxy-view glasses eliminate the strap across your face during the day with the result that you barely remember you're attached to tubing. At night the cannula goes back on.

The glasses would not be useful for someone who wears glasses only sporadically during the day because that would require switching from glasses to cannula repeatedly.

Mereth welcome to NHOPA. Thanks for sharing your experience with the Oxy-View glasses and thanks for the reminder of the alternative equipment that is available. Oxy-View glasses incorporate the oxygen tubing into the frame of the glasses thereby limiting the tubing that goes over the ears. Oxy-View glasses can be used with clear glass or have your eye care professional install your prescription lenses. More information can be found at www.oxyview.com or by calling 877-699-8439.

Transtracheal Oxygen Saline

Myrna Criswell wrote “I noticed in the November newsletter that the [Transtracheal System] people were working with NeilMed to develop a new saline canister. I had so many problems with the old Blairex canisters that I had investigated other alternatives. Thru my oxygen company, I have been getting Kimberly Clarks 15ml squeezable vials. They are great because you can carry a vial with you easily and have it available any time you feel clogged. I love my SCOOP [Transtracheal Oxygen catheter] and love it even more now that I have this option for saline.”

Myrna thanks for your feedback! More information on the NeilMed canister is available at www.tto2.com or by calling NeilMed at 877-477-8633.

Retractable Oxygen Reel

Celeste Belyea of the Pulmonary Paper wrote to let us know about the Colvin Designs retractable oxygen tubing reel. She was notified that Colvin Designs no longer makes this product due to inability to obtain parts.

Thanks for the feedback Celeste!

Reader Experience in Traveling with Oxygen

Rich Naruo wrote of his experiences traveling with a POC. “My [initial] flight was CA to WI via Chicago O’Hare on American Airlines. On all flight legs, American Airlines personnel knew the rules and travel was trouble-free. I rented a Respironics Evergo with extra batteries. On the CA to O’Hare flight American seated me in row

11 of their Boeing 757, where plug-in power was available. This gave me plenty of battery reserve.

After this experience, I was anxious to travel again [and] I had my first flight on JetBlue; a non-stop from Long Beach to Washington Dulles [with] an Inogen One. At Long Beach JetBlue personnel were very thorough in checking my prescription and the equipment. Plug-in power was not available in any rows, but I had plenty of batteries.

Return trip was a nightmare. Two days later, at Washington Dulles, JetBlue turned into a different company. When I checked in, the counter agent did not know how to handle the POC, even though my reservation file showed I was carrying the device. After some calls, she informed me the device was not allowed! I showed her pages from the JetBlue website which showed the rules for POC travel. She again made some calls and talked to a supervisor, then confirmed that the device could not go as “carry-on” – that it had to be checked! Even if I could fly without supplemental oxygen, I was not about to ship the expensive machine without adequate packaging.

Obviously, I was dumbfounded that I was allowed to carry the device on the outbound flight but not the return! The JetBlue agent claimed that Long Beach made a mistake! I requested our boarding passes, choosing to deal with gate personnel.

We passed through TSA security check without a hitch. At the gate, we were greeted by an agent who had been warned by the counter agent that I had the POC. Fortunately, this gate agent wanted to help me. After conferring with other agents and the flight captain, they decided that I could board with my oxygen concentrator.

In my travels, I am used to finding airline and airport personnel who don’t know how to handle oxygen related issues. But now, even TSA seems to have trained all their personnel. So this was especially shocking to find that within one airline I found such extreme ends of competence.

I rented the POC equipment from Oxygen Freedom in Montana, very knowledgeable and helpful, and offered the best prices of all the other rental companies I found.

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Wyoming Residents

Nancy Stearns (Riverton, WY) is organizing a state-wide support group for Wyoming residents with Pulmonary Hypertension. Those interested in being included in the patient contact list, please contact her at pinnut3200@yahoo.com

Interested in keeping up with your New Year's Resolution to exercise more? Roxlyn Cole let us know about American Lung Association stair climb events taking place over the US. "The ALA has stair climb events all over the country...oxygen [users] can find one near them, and perhaps some might try one or get a friend to do it...or, be a "virtual" climber on [a] team. Get your medical team to try the climb, or a friend or relative. I tell them to help the lung association to help COPD and other lung diseases, it might someday help them." Check out www.lungusa.org and go to "Programs and Events" for more information.

I Didn't Know That.....

(received via email – anonymous)

Q: Why are people in the public eye said to be "in the limelight"?

A: Invented in 1825, limelight was used in lighthouses and stage lighting by burning a cylinder of lime which produced a brilliant light. In the theatre, performers on stage "in the limelight" were seen by the audience to be the center of attention.

Q: Why do ships and aircraft in trouble use "mayday" as their call for help?

A: This comes from the French word m'aidez -meaning "help me" --- and is pronounced "mayday."

Q: Why is someone who is feeling great "on cloud nine"?

A: Types of clouds are numbered according to the altitudes they attain, with nine being the highest cloud. If someone is said to be on cloud nine, that person is floating well above worldly cares.

Q: Why are zero scores in tennis called "love"?

A: In France, where tennis first became popular, a big, round zero on scoreboard looked like an egg and was called "l'oeuf," which is French for "egg." When tennis was introduced in the US, Americans pronounced it "love."

Q: In golf, where did the term "Caddie" come from?

A: When Mary, later Queen of Scots, went to France as a young girl (for education and survival), Louis, King of France, learned that she loved the Scot game "golf." So he had the first golf course outside of Scotland built for her enjoyment. To make sure she was properly chaperoned (and guarded) while she played, Louis hired cadets from a military school to accompany her. Mary liked this a lot and when she returned to Scotland (not a very good idea in the long run), she took the practice with her. In French, the word "le cadet" means "the boy" or the youngest of the family and cadets were often the young sons of the aristocracy.

◆ **For up-to-date information and membership applications go to www.homeoxygen.org** ◆