VOLUNTEERS
June, 2019

THE TRIBUTE

What you will learn:

- **Facts about Oxygen**
- **Oxygen use in hospice**
- **Tips to remember when patients have oxygen**
- **Safety measures related to Oxygen**

The Tribute is a monthly newsletter published for member agencies in honor of our Hospice volunteers!

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Facts About Oxygen

Oxygen is needed to live on this Earth. It is the third most abundant element in the world. It makes up about 2/3 of the human body mass. The human body is 75% water and as you know the chemistry of water is H2O, therefore keeping our bodies hydrated helps with maintaining adequate oxygen levels and the overall function of the body. Oxygen makes up 65% of the elements of our body tissues such as blood, organs, tissues, and skin.

Some researchers have found that "Oxygen plays a pivotal role in the proper functioning of the immune system. We can look at oxygen deficiency as the single greatest cause of all diseases." Of all the essential nutrients needed by the human, oxygen is the one we must have on a moment to moment basis. We can't live without it even for a few minutes, yet, this is the one nutrient most people don't associate with deficiency problems. Oxygen deficiency has a negative effect on our health, activity and quality of life. Oxygen deprivation can be associated with all kinds of chronic diseases, including cancer. Oxygen enhances the body's ability to rebuild itself, remove toxins from blood, and build the immune system. It will improve concentration, memory & alertness.

"In all serious disease states we find a concomitant low oxygen state… Low oxygen in the body tissues is a sure indicator for disease…Hypoxia, or lack of oxygen in the tissues, is the fundamental cause for all degenerative disease. Oxygen is the source of life to all cells."

-Stephen Levine

Oxygen Use in Hospice

Oxygen is widely used in every healthcare setting. In one study on the use of oxygen at end of life 96% of the facilities had a standing "comfort care" order for end-of-life patients that offered oxygen, regardless of whether patients had a need for it or not. The reasons given to use it were: patient comfort, family request, emotional comfort of family, prolongation of life when that was a patient goal, and emotional comfort of staff.

Oxygen requires a physician's orders about how much oxygen to be given per minute and how it is delivered-be it cannula or mask and is it as needed or all the time or during periods of distress. The most common order we see for our hospice patients is 2 liters per minute for adults. As a patient nears the end of life and there may be severe shortness of breath the rate may be increased to 3- 5 liters/minute in some cases.

If you are Volunteering with a patient who is using oxygen it is important to remember that there are some observations or reports from patients to be aware of that may need to be reported to the Volunteer Manager. First, sometimes the tubing pressing against the ear continuously will cause the ear to be sore and it can even create skin break down if not attended. The patient may complain of their nose being very dry; loved ones may be reluctant to get close to the patient to give a hug, or hold the patient close for fear of upsetting their Oxygen setup. It can also be a hassle if the patient is still ambulatory and having to drag the tank and the tubing around the house.

One fact we should always remember about oxygen is that it makes things burn much faster. In the next reading we will cover some safety tips to keep in mind when working with your patients and families, as well as to remember in your own personal life.

Uses of Medical Oxygen:

- It is used with most all modern anesthetic techniques
- Helps return tissue oxygen tension by improving oxygen levels in a wide range of conditions such as COPD, cyanosis, shock, severe hemorrhage, carbon monoxide poisoning, major trauma
- It is also used for:
  - Cardiac/respiratory arrest aid resuscitation
  - Provide life support for patients on ventilators
  - Promote cardiovascular stability

Safety Points to Remember

- Should have working smoke detectors & fire extinguishers in the home.
- A "NO SMOKING" sign in every room where oxygen is used.
- Keep the medical equipment provider's contact telephone numbers, and the numbers for other emergency services, posted near a phone.
- Keep oxygen away from the stove top and oven.
- Secure oxygen cylinders to avoid turning over.
- Splattering grease can catch fire.
- Avoid tripping over oxygen tubing. May tape tubing to the back of your shirt.
- Teach children not to get tangled in the tubing.
- Do not try to repair broken equipment on your own.
- Oxygen should be used according to doctor's orders.
- Request a "priority service listing" with utility companies.

Keep oxygen at least 6 feet (2 meters) away from:

- **Toys with electric motors**
- **Electric baseboard or space heaters**
- **Wood stoves, fireplaces, candles**
- **Electric blankets**
- **Hairdryers, electric razors, and electric toothbrushes**

Petroleum Is a Safety Hazard!

DO NOT use Vaseline or other petroleum-based creams on face or upper part of body. These materials are highly flammable and will burn readily with the presence of oxygen. If skin moisturizers are desired consider using cocoa butter, aloe vera or other similar products. For lubrication or rehydration of dry nasal passages, use water-based products.

Resources: https://medlineplus.gov/ency/patientinstructions/000049.htm; https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/29677408 ; https://hospicepatients.org/hospic33.html; http://migraineze.com/oxygen-quotes/ ; https://www.austinozone.com/education/oxygen/; https://www.nurseteachings.com/tag/oxygenhttps:// ; www.azquotes.com/quote/852172?ref=oxygen

Name:_____ Date:_____

Post Test for Oxygen

1. Oxygen is one of the most abundant elements in the world. True False
2. Our bodies require oxygen to live. True False
3. Oxygen deficiencies may create problems for living creatures. True False
4. Medical oxygen is used in hospice very often. True False
5. Using medical oxygen doesn't pose any safety hazards. True False
6. It is important to help patients understand oxygen makes things burn faster. True False
7. Volunteers should observe and report any issues/problems to manager related to patients using oxygen. True False
8. It is ok to use Vaseline for dry nose when patients using oxygen. True False
9. Oxygen should be kept away from the stove top or oven. True False
10. Most hospices have Oxygen in their standing comfort care orders. True False