

## OXYGEN THERAPY AND QUALITY OF LIFE

# Oxygen Therapy and Quality of Life

Some patients with idiopathic pulmonary fibrosis (IPF) may be prescribed oxygen therapy after being assessed by a doctor. For those patients, oxygen therapy may allow them to be more physically active. While medications and alternative therapeutic treatments are available, taking supplemental oxygen can help patients with IPF feel better and get the oxygen they need today to maintain a more active lifestyle. It's important to remember, however, that for some, oxygen therapy may only be needed during activity, but for others, it may also be needed at rest.

Ensuring your body has the oxygen it needs plays an important role in IPF management. Because IPF reduces the capacity your lungs have to deliver enough oxygen to your blood, muscles, heart, brain, and vital organs—they can become oxygen deprived, resulting in many side effects, including: placing additional strain on your heart, shortness of breath, fatigue, and aching muscles and joints.

Oxygen therapy (along with lifestyle changes like eating well, getting plenty of rest, avoiding smoking, and joining a support group) may help you keep a positive attitude and help maintain your quality of life.

## Supplemental Oxygen Addiction

As IPF progresses, the body is unable to inhale the oxygen it needs. Supplemental oxygen helps your lungs deliver more oxygen to the body and brain. Oxygen therapy helps the lungs to increase the level of oxygen transferred to the blood, bringing the oxygen in your blood to a better level.



## Easy Answers to Big Questions

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### What Will People Think?

One of the biggest challenges patients can face is the stigma that is sometimes associated with IPF. Patients can become self-conscious when carrying around an oxygen tank, or when suffering from uncontrollable symptoms such as shortness of breath and coughing, in public.

### **Taking charge can make a difference.**

There are many ways patients can learn to handle the stigma often associated with IPF and carrying oxygen in public.



## **Become an Advocate**

Many patients work to make a difference by using their condition to help others and to help bring awareness to IPF.



## **Join a Support Group**

Joining a support group and sharing your experience with other IPF patients can make a real difference in coping with the emotions and challenges patients face when living with IPF.

Whatever the challenge, it's always better to brave the public than to stay at home and miss out on living a full life. Fresh air, nature, socializing with other people, and remaining active are key ingredients to maintaining a normal and fulfilling lifestyle.



## **Is Oxygen a Drug?**

## **Supplemental oxygen is a prescription medication.**

Oxygen therapy is considered a medical treatment, and therefore must be prescribed by a doctor. Some patients may require oxygen therapy at home throughout the day, while others may need it only while at the doctor's office or when exerting themselves.

If you're a candidate for supplemental oxygen therapy, your prescription may include:

- How much oxygen you need, and when (at rest, during exercise, while sleeping, etc.).
- How many hours a day you will need supplemental oxygen.
- What type of oxygen and delivery system best suit your lifestyle.



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## What is the Cost of Oxygen Therapy?

### Can I Afford It?

Most insurance plans, including Medicare and Medicaid, will cover most costs related to your supplemental oxygen therapy, as long as your test results show that you need the oxygen. Additional costs can also be covered by your supplemental policies. Insurance coverage varies, so check with your insurance provider about your coverage. Your health care provider can help you choose the right company to meet your needs for supplemental oxygen.

[Learn more at medicare.gov](https://www.medicare.gov)

## Living with Oxygen



### Preparing the House

When using supplemental oxygen, it's important to prepare your house in advance. Be cautious with oxygen tanks around open flames, cigarettes, and heaters, and be sure to store oxygen tanks safely.



### Traveling with an Oxygen Tank

Today, traveling with oxygen is possible when you prepare in advance. Some patients are able to carry a smaller, travel-size tank when they travel to make getting around easier.

[Download Living With Oxygen tip sheet](#)

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