



Department of Respiratory Medicine

Portable Oxygen Hire for Air Travel

This leaflet offers advice and guidance for patients with respiratory conditions who may need supplementary oxygen during air travel.

What do I do if I need oxygen when flying?

Some patients with long-term respiratory conditions may have been advised to request a hypoxic challenge (sometimes called a 'fit to fly' test) before booking any airline travel to make sure that they are safe to fly. If you have not been advised about this, you do not need to worry.

We recommend that you contact your Respiratory Consultant's secretary to request a hypoxic challenge test about 8 weeks before you plan to fly. This will give plenty of time to organise the test and any oxygen equipment that you might need.

If the hypoxic challenge shows that you need oxygen, you will be given a summary of the test results and a formal letter confirming the details of your requirement. You can then use these documents to arrange rental of suitable portable oxygen equipment for your flights.

What does portable oxygen look like?

Oxygen Cylinders are metal capsules that contain compressed pure oxygen. They do not need any power supply, but can only be refilled by the supplier, so they can empty and have no oxygen left. Please ensure that you order enough cylinders for both your outgoing and homecoming flights.

There are very many different sizes of cylinder, but we would recommend you hire oxygen cylinders that are size CD.

- At 2L/min, a full CD cylinder will last about 3h 50min.
- At 4L/min, a full CD cylinder will last about 1h 55min.

Oxygen Concentrators are machines that make oxygen out of the air around them. These will never run out of oxygen, but they need a power supply or sufficient batteries to last the whole flight. You must also make sure that the device is FAA approved (Federal Aviation Administration) or you may not be allowed to take it onto the plane.

There are limits to how much oxygen the machines can make, so if you need a lot of oxygen, a concentrator may not be enough for your needs and you will have to use cylinders.

How do I arrange oxygen for flying?

Firstly, check the Oxygen Policy of the airline you intend to fly with. You should be able to find this on their website. Some airlines will provide oxygen for you; others will require you to hire the equipment yourself and bring it with you. Often, the airline will need you to have a medical information form (MEDIF) completed by a doctor.

You'll need your documents from the hypoxic challenge test to be able to give the doctor, airline and oxygen hire company all the correct information to get you the right equipment for your needs.

Where can I hire portable oxygen equipment?

Below are the details of some companies where you can hire oxygen equipment for holidays. (Please note that we are not affiliated with any of these companies, nor can we endorse their services; we provide these details for your information only.)

British Oxygen Company

Provide oxygen cylinders for rental

Website: bohealthcare.co.uk
Email: bohealthcare-uk@boc.com
Phone: 0800 111 333
Fax: 0800 111 555
Address: BOC, Priestley Road, Worsley,
Manchester, M28 2UT

Dolby Vivisol

Provide oxygen equipment for rental

Website: dolbyvivisol.co.uk
Email: vivitravel@dolbyvivisol.com
Phone: 0330 123 0305
Address: Dolby Medical Home, North Suite,
Lomond Court, Castle Business
Park, Stirling, FK9 4TU

Pure O2

Provide oxygen concentrators for rental

Website: healthoxygen.com
Email: info@healthoxygen.com
Phone: 0161 747 2617
Fax: 0207 681 3797
Address: Pure O2 Ltd, Viking House, 71
Princess Road, Urmston,
Manchester, M41 5ST

The Oxygen Store

Provide oxygen concentrators for rental

Website: theoxygenstore.com
Email: admin@theoxygenstore.com
Phone: 0178 533 8111
Fax: 0345 100 0085
Address: The Oxygen Store, Old Bank
Chambers, 4 Glebe Street, Stoke
on Trent, ST4 1HG

Useful Websites:

The British Lung Foundation has a lot of useful information about flying with oxygen:

- www.blf.org.uk/support-for-you/going-on-holiday/holidaying-with-oxygen

The European Lung Foundation has the oxygen policies from most international airlines:

- www.europeanlung.org/en/information-hub/air-travel/airline-index

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If you have feedback regarding the accuracy of the information contained in this leaflet, or if you would like a list of references used to develop this leaflet, please email pals@dchft.nhs.uk



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