

What kind of home oxygen therapy equipment and supplies does the Assistive Devices Program (ADP) cover?

The ADP provides funding assistance for the rental of a basic oxygen supply system and the associated services necessary to maintain oxygen therapy in the home.

When determining which basic oxygen supply system meets the individual's medical requirements, the following must be taken into consideration:

- the system provides for portability and allows the client to carry out activities of daily living;
- the system provides the prescribed litre flow; and,
- there is a backup system in the event of power or equipment failure.

Who can apply?

Any permanent resident of Ontario who has a valid health card issued in their name, and has a respiratory illness or dysfunction resulting in a need for long-term oxygen therapy.

ADP does not provide funding assistance to individuals eligible for funding assistance under Workplace Safety & Insurance Board or to Group "A" Veterans for their pensioned conditions.

ADP does not provide funding assistance to people in acute or chronic care hospitals.

How do I apply?

A physician or nurse practitioner must prescribe home oxygen therapy. Based on their assessment of your medical condition, your physician or nurse practitioner will determine if home oxygen therapy is required.

Eligibility for funding assistance is based on established medical eligibility criteria. Your physician or nurse practitioner must complete the Application for Funding Home Oxygen. Included on the application are test results indicating if you meet ADP's medical eligibility criteria.

Who can sign my Application Form?

You are required to sign the application form. If you are unable to sign, someone who has the legal authority to act on your behalf may do so. This may be your spouse, parent, child, power of attorney, or public trustee.

What are the medical criteria?

To receive funding assistance, you must meet ADP's medical eligibility criteria, which states that your blood oxygen levels must be below a specific preset level. Your physician or nurse practitioner will test your blood oxygen levels to determine if you meet the criteria.

A blood gas test is usually done in the hospital. It involves taking blood from an artery. An oximetry test may also be done by your physician or nurse practitioner, or by a Regulated Health Professional. This involves placing a small sensor on your finger, to read your blood oxygen levels.

What happens next?

If your physician or nurse practitioner determines that home oxygen therapy is required, arrangements will be made for a Vendor of Record for Home Oxygen Services to initiate oxygen therapy in your home. Vendors of Record are suppliers of oxygen equipment and supplies, who have been approved by the ADP to provide this service. Vendors of Record are required to follow the ADP's policies. They cannot charge more than the approved amount for providing oxygen equipment and the associated services.

The prescribing physician or nurse practitioner, the Vendor of Record and you or your legal agent will complete the Application for Funding Home Oxygen. It should take approximately six weeks from receipt of a properly completed form for ADP to review your application. If ADP is unable to approve funding you will be notified directly by mail. If funding is approved, ADP will notify your Vendor of Record.

How do I get my home oxygen equipment?

You will choose your Vendor of Record. A list of Vendors of Record is available on our Web site at www.health.gov.on.ca/adp or by contacting us (please see the last page of this information sheet).

Your physician or nurse practitioner, or any other health care professional involved in your care may also be able to assist with this decision. We advise you to shop around among the vendors listed as a Vendor of Record for Home Oxygen Services.

How do I know what kind of oxygen delivery system to get?

The oxygen delivery system provided must meet your medical requirements for litre flow and portability. The Vendor of Record must also provide you with a backup system in the event of a power failure or equipment malfunction.

Your physician or nurse practitioner may be able to suggest an appropriate oxygen delivery system or you can discuss this with the Vendor of Record.

There are four types of oxygen delivery systems:

Concentrator: Is a machine (stationary or portable) that makes oxygen by taking in room air and sifting out the oxygen. It is electrically or battery operated.

Cylinder system: Are tanks of compressed oxygen. Large tanks are used inside the home, and small tanks are used for outings or travel. Large cylinders are often used for babies who need special equipment.

Liquid system: Is a system that stores oxygen in liquid form. The liquid oxygen is kept in large stationary containers called "reservoirs". Portable units are filled from the reservoir for travel or use outside the home. The liquid turns into gas before it leaves the container and it remains a gas when it is breathed in.

Transfill System: Is a concentrator capable of transfilling a small lightweight cylinder.

Are there safety precautions I should take when using an oxygen system?

Yes. Precautions you should take when using oxygen therapy in the home include the following:

- Oxygen does not burn by itself, but it will "feed a fire" so safety is important. Signs should be posted wherever oxygen is in use. Ask your vendor for a sign. Also, let your local fire department know that you have oxygen in your home.
- Keep oxygen systems away from any sources of heat or open flame. Ask your physician or nurse practitioner, and the Vendor of Record's health professional about safety tips for using oxygen in the home and while travelling.
- Do not smoke or let anyone else smoke in the area where oxygen is in use. Smoking is a serious fire hazard to oxygen users and it is a health risk. Ask others to refrain from smoking while visiting you.
- Do not use Vaseline or petroleum products on an oxygen user's face. Ask your pharmacist for an oil-free face cream if necessary.
- Do not smoke or let anyone else smoke in the area where oxygen is in use. Smoking is a serious fire hazard to oxygen users and it is a health risk. Ask others to refrain from smoking while visiting you.
- Store oxygen in a well-ventilated area of the house. Do not store any cylinders or liquid units in a closet.
- Frost injuries to the skin can occur when filling portable liquid tanks from larger units. Ask the person delivering the oxygen to watch you fill your portable liquid unit to make sure you are doing it correctly.

- Sometimes the oxygen or the tubing can cause skin irritation and drying of the nose. Call your physician or nurse practitioner, or the vendor's health professional if you are having problems.

Whom do I call if I have problems with my equipment?

If you have any problems using your equipment or need replacement supplies, contact your Vendor of Record.

How much money does ADP contribute?

ADP will pay 100% of the monthly rental cost of a basic oxygen system if you are:

- 65 years or older or,
- a recipient of Ontario Works (OW), Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP), Assistance to Children with Severe Disabilities (ACSD), or,
- receiving professional services through the Community Care Access Centre (CCAC) or,
- a resident of a Long Term Care home (LTCH).

ADP will pay 75% of the monthly rental cost of a basic oxygen supply system if you are:

- 64 years or younger and do not meet one of the criteria listed above.

You are responsible for paying the remaining 25%.

ADP funding assistance will also contribute to the costs of disposable supplies such as masks, nasal cannula and bubble humidifiers.

Does this mean that ADP will pay 100% of my costs for equipment/supplies?

Not necessarily. You must pay the vendor directly for any non ADP funded options you may choose to purchase or rent for your equipment. Be sure to ask your vendor how much of the total cost you will be responsible for.

Does ADP pay for Repairs?

The vendor of record is responsible for all maintenance and repairs, unless you, your family or your friends have damaged the equipment due to neglect or wilful misconduct.

What if I am not eligible for ADP funding assistance?

If you need a communication aid but are not eligible for ADP funding assistance, your insurance company may pay for it. If you do not have insurance, you may want to consider buying reconditioned equipment. Agencies, such as the March of Dimes, Easter Seals Society, and community service groups may help.

What if I have more questions about ADP?

Contact us at:

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