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respiratory BREATHING CARE

story by
ASHLEY
WOOD

introduction to oxygen cylinders and accessories

Selecting the best products to increase clients' comfort and mobility.

For patients who use supplemental oxygen, portable cylinders can be a great way to allow them freedom to move around as they please. Here we'll review the types of oxygen cylinders, how to determine the best size and key accessories.

WHAT ARE THE DIFFERENT SIZES OF OXYGEN CYLINDERS?

Two sets of names are used to differentiate between oxygen cylinder sizes. The original set uses an alphabetical system, starting with A for the smallest size and E for the largest portable size. The new naming system begins with the letter "M," for "medical," followed by a number that signifies the amount of

cubic feet of oxygen in that can be compressed into the cylinder. So the original B cylinder is now often referred to as an M-6 cylinder because it can hold 6 cubic feet of oxygen. For a handy chart that matches oxygen cylinder sizes with their dimensions, capacity and accessories, visit www.sunsethcs.com/oxygen.

HOW DO I KNOW WHICH SIZE IS BEST FOR MY CLIENT?

The optimal size will depend on a client's lifestyle and prescribed flow rate. The most common size is the M6. However, if the client is confined to a wheelchair, a larger E cylinder with a wheelchair bag may be more appropriate. Or, if he or she only leaves the house

for short periods of time and weight is an issue, a smaller M4 cylinder may be better.

To determine how long an oxygen cylinder will last, there are several factors to consider: The patient's prescribed flow rate in L/minute; the tank capacity in liters and whether they are using a regulator or a conserver. A regulator will provide continuous flow at a given flow rate. A conserver will sense when the patient is breathing and only expel oxygen when the patient is breathing in. Most conservers allow the tanks to last three to five times longer, but can be up to 10 times as expensive as regulators and are not reimbursed by insurance companies so they are not always worth the extra cost.

WHAT ACCESSORIES WILL MY CLIENT NEED?

All patients should be supplied with a cylinder wrench and a “No Smoking” sign (it is recommended that patients hang a sign on all entrances to the building as well as in the room where the oxygen is being delivered).

For portable tanks, a carrier bag or cart is recommended. The most common bags range in sizes from M6, which can hold M6, M4 and M2 cylinders, up to E bags, which can be attached to a wheelchair or scooter. M6 bags often have straps to keep smaller

cylinders in place. This can help reduce bag inventory by not having to stock separate bags for patients with small tanks. Many different styles are available with the most common being shoulder bags, backpacks and wheelchair bags. Bag type can be based on the patient’s preference; however, it is recommended that all bags are made of nonflammable materials.

The final accessory needed is a regulator or conserver. When selecting one, keep in mind that there are two main types of valves on oxygen cylinders. CGA 870 styles are

used on tanks that are size E and smaller. CGA 540 style valves are used on larger, nonportable tanks. So you will want to select the type of regulator or conserver that matches the valve on your patient’s cylinder.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR: Ashley Wood is the director of operations for Sunset Healthcare Solutions, a national manufacturer and distributor of CPAP and oxygen products. You can reach her at ashley@sunsethcs.com or 312-997-9980. For more information on the products listed in this article, visit www.sunsethcs.com.

All HCPCS codes subject to change.

respiratory PRODUCTS



SUNSET HEALTHCARE SOLUTIONS OXYGEN NASAL CANNULAS AND TUBES

Sunset’s full line of oxygen nasal cannulas and oxygen tubes are tested and proven to provide maximum safety and comfort. All tubes are three-channel safety tubes and are kink-free to ensure uninterrupted airflow. The cannulas are contoured to match the shape of the patient’s face to help keep the cannulas in place. The nasal prongs are curved and tapered for comfort that feels natural, and the material is soft, memory-free and lightweight for long-term use. The line includes standard, high-flow and demand cannulas with a variety of tube lengths to accommodate any patient. For ease of resupplies, Sunset also offers customizable O₂ kits that contain a three-month supply of tubes and cannulas in one easy-to-handle package. Note: Medicare will not reimburse for oxygen accessories except when used with patient-owned equipment.

HCPCS: A4615

Sunset Healthcare Solutions, 877-578-6738, www.sunsethcs.com

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INVACARE® HOMEFILL® OXYGEN SYSTEM WITH M2 CYLINDER

The Invacare HomeFill Oxygen System defines ambulatory oxygen by allowing patients to fill their own high-pressure cylinders from a concentrator. The ability to fill their own cylinders gives ambulatory oxygen patients greater independence and freedom. Home care oxygen providers will also benefit from the virtual elimination of time-consuming and costly service calls associated with cylinder and/or liquid oxygen deliveries. The HomeFill Oxygen System allows the patient to breathe at home from a continuous flow concentrator and then use a convenient ambulatory pack then they are out and about. An ideal accompaniment is the durable Invacare M2 Cylinder, which weighs only 2 lbs. and fills in just 24 minutes. Paired with the Invacare HomeFill Oxygen Filling System, the M2 Cylinder gives patients the freedom to go where they want, when they want.

Invacare Corporation, 800-333-6900, www.invacare.com

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O₂ EAR BUDDIES

O₂ Ear Buddies eliminate ear pain by allowing the nasal cannula to completely bypass the back of the ear. They are ideal in a range of capacities, from durable medical equipment and home health care equipment providers to home care nurses or even just a concerned family member. O₂ Ear Buddies are the cost-effective solution for users of oxygen who wish to combat sore ears. Easy to use, O₂ Ear Buddies fasten to any hat, visor or headband and can be removed quickly and easily without disrupting the patient. Above all, O₂ Ear Buddies provide comfort for patients who require oxygen by eliminating the constant rubbing of the oxygen tube on the back of the ears. O₂ Ear Buddies are made of durable lightweight medical grade plastic.

O₂ Ear Buddies, 877-796-2327, www.o2earbuddies.com

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