

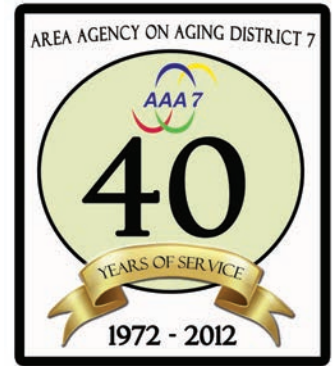
Caregiver Assistance News

"Caring for You - Caring for Others"

Area Agency on Aging District 7, Inc.

Serving Adams, Brown, Gallia, Highland, Jackson, Lawrence, Pike, Ross, Scioto and Vinton Counties in Ohio

www.aaa7.org **Helping You Age Better!**



AUGUST 2012

Oxygen Therapy for Lung Disease

Dying for a Breath

When lung disease (COPD) progresses to the point that the lungs can't supply enough oxygen to meet the needs of the body, the doctor may prescribe home oxygen therapy. Symptoms that show oxygen may be needed include:

- Excessive sleepiness
- Morning headaches and irritability
- Poor concentration
- Worsening shortness of breath
- Swelling of the feet, ankles, and legs

Some people think that using oxygen will reduce their independence, or that they will become addicted to it; however, oxygen therapy can greatly improve energy levels, the ability to breathe, and overall quality of life. Using this therapy can add years to a person's life. The doctor will use various tests to find out when, and how much, oxygen is needed.

Oxygen Containers

Oxygen comes in different kinds of containers and is given through soft prongs inserted into the nose, or through a tube inserted surgically directly into the throat.

- Liquid Oxygen - stored as a very

cold liquid in a container like a thermos; when released, the liquid changes to a gas that is breathed like compressed gas; the liquid can be transferred to small portable containers; and liquid oxygen is more expensive than compressed gas.

- Concentrator - this electrically powered device separates the oxygen from the air, concentrates it, and then stores it. A tank of oxygen is needed in case of power failures.
- Oxygen Tanks - oxygen is stored under pressure in a tank with a regulator that controls the oxygen flow rate. The tanks can be large or portable.

The doctor will prescribe a specific flow rate of oxygen and you will need to make sure that not too much, or too little, is given. Different flow rates may be given for sleeping and when active. **Care must be taken to avoid having anything flammable in the room where the oxygen container is kept, such as a cigarette lighter or gas range.**

Monitoring Tools

Doctors monitor lung function and levels with:



- Oximeter - a clip that attaches to the finger and measures the amount of oxygen in the blood.
- Spirometer - a device that measures how well a person can exhale.
- Peak flow meter—measures how well air is moving out of the lungs.

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Belly Breathing and Pursed-Lip Breathing

Diaphragmatic Breathing (Also Known as Belly Breathing) - Helps a person relax and get more air out of the lungs. Have the person in your care practice this breathing technique by sitting in a comfortable chair or lying down. Ask them to place one hand on their abdomen and one hand on their chest. As they breathe in, have them notice how the abdominal muscles relax and then, as they exhale, ask them to tighten the abdominal muscles to help push air out. The chest should not move. The exhalation (breathing out) should always take longer than the inhalation (breathing in). It is very important that the person in your care do these exercises while calm and relaxed so that they will be able to break into the habit of breathing this way.



Pursed-Lip Breathing - Helps to keep the breathing tubes open during exhalation and improve the ability to slowly get more air out of the lungs. This type of breathing is used mainly for people with COPD (emphysema or bronchitis). To practice this technique, have the person in your care take a breath in through the nose and slowly let the breath out through pursed lips (as if they were whistling). Pursed-lip breathing and belly breathing are done together.

Flying with Oxygen - Make reservations as far in advance as possible prior to flying as medical clearance can take up to 30 days since you will need to ask your doctor to fill out forms.

For more information, visit www.breathineasy.com

Note that airlines are not required to provide oxygen service, and some, such as Southwest Airlines, do not.

Empty cylinders can be checked as baggage; in fact, most airlines won't allow them in the cabin.

Traveling with oxygen, concentrators and vents is a very complex subject. Check with your airline for details and the latest rules.

Live Life Laughing



"When I talk to my wife, I always keep my words soft and sweet, just in case I have to eat them."

Conserve Energy

People with COPD must conserve their energy so they won't become exhausted. Encourage the person to:

- Take it easy; move slowly.
- Sit while doing chores.
- Avoid lifting and bending; keep household items within easy reach.
- Rest after eating.
- Use a cart with wheels to carry things.
- Use helping devices such as a long-handled reacher or long-handled tongs.
- Use a bath bench and hand-held shower.



"Conceal a flaw, and the world will imagine the worst."

Taking Care of Yourself - Stress Relief

Stress can make breathing more difficult, and when people have trouble breathing, they may become anxious. This can turn into panic and make breathing even more of a problem. Relaxation techniques are very helpful for people with chronic lung disease, and also for their caregivers. Here are some tips to help the person in your care and you relax:



- Develop a regular habit of yoga, prayer, meditation, or listening to soothing music.
- Use your imagination to pretend you are on the beach or some other peaceful place and stay there until you feel calm.
- Slowly tense and then relax each part of your body, starting with your toes and work your way up. Remember to breathe while you do this exercise.

Care and Support Workshop for Family Caregivers in Selected Counties

“What Families Need to Know...When the Diagnosis is Alzheimer’s Disease or Related Dementia”

Caring for someone with memory loss is a 24-hour-a-day challenge. This series of educational sessions provides a special opportunity for families to learn and share together in an informal setting. Topics are presented by experts in their respective fields.

Scioto County

Two-Part Series: September 11 and 18

1:00 pm - 4:00 pm

United Scioto Senior Activities, Inc., 2nd Floor Meeting Room
117 Market Street, Portsmouth, Ohio

Gallia County

Two-Part Series: September 24 and October 1

from 1:00 pm - 4:00 pm

Holzer Medical Center, Ground Floor Conference Center
100 Jackson Pike, Gallipolis, Ohio

Jackson/Vinton County

Two-Part Series: October 16 and 23

1:00 pm - 4:00 pm

Holzer Medical Center - Jackson, Community Education Room
500 Burlington Road, Jackson, Ohio

The program is free of charge, but reservations must be made in advance. For more information, call the Alzheimer’s Association of Greater Cincinnati at 1-800-272-3900.



Scioto County

Saturday, September 22nd
Market Square in Portsmouth
Call 1-800-272-3900 for more information.

Mark Your Calendar!

Medicare Check-Up Days Coming This Fall!

Adams County

November 5th at 10:00 am - Adams County Senior Center, West Union

Brown County

November 7th at 10:00 am

Adams Brown Community Action, Georgetown

Gallia County

October 17th at 10:00 am - University of Rio Grande, Rio Grande
BY APPOINTMENT ONLY - Call 1-800-582-7277, ext. 250 (Kristy Bowman)

Highland County

October 18th at 9:30 am - Heartland of Hillsboro, Hillsboro

Jackson County

November 26th at 9:00 am

Jackson One Stop Tech and Training Center, Jackson
BY APPOINTMENT ONLY - Call 740-286-4181, ext. 343 (Nan Miller)

Lawrence County

November 27th at 10:30 am - Southern Branch Library, South Point

Pike County

October 22nd at 10:00 am - Bristol Village, Waverly

Ross County

November 16th at 10:00 am - Ross County Senior Center, Chillicothe
BY APPOINTMENT ONLY - Call 740-773-3544

Scioto County

December 3rd at 10:00 am

United Scioto Senior Activities (USSA), Portsmouth
BY APPOINTMENT ONLY - Call 1-800-582-7277, ext. 250 (Kristy Bowman)

Vinton County

December 4th at 9:00 am - Vinton County Senior Center, McArthur

For more information, call the AAA7 at 1-800-582-7277, extension 250



Area Agency on Aging District 7, Inc.

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Website: www.aaa7.org • E-Mail: info@aaa7.org • Facebook: www.facebook.com/AreaAgencyOnAgingDistrict7

Your local Area Agency on Aging District 7, Inc. serves the following counties in Ohio: Adams, Brown, Gallia, Highland, Jackson, Lawrence, Pike, Ross, Scioto and Vinton.

Services are rendered on a non-discriminatory basis. Those interested in learning more about the services provided through the

Area Agency on Aging District 7 can call toll-free at 1-800-582-7277. Here, individuals can talk directly with a nurse or social worker who will assist them with information surrounding the programs and services that are available to best serve their needs. The Agency can also be reached via e-mail at info@aaa7.org.

Avoiding Air Pollution, Irritants, Allergens and Smoking

People with COPD may be affected by irritating substances in the air, or they may have allergies to airborne allergens (substances that are carried on the air that cause allergic reactions like sneezing or watery eyes) such as pollen. Any kind of air pollution inside or outside of the home should be avoided, including dust, smoke, fumes from wood or coal-burning stoves, and strong odors in general. Some people are highly allergic to mold and may have trouble breathing if they are exposed to it.

The most important thing a person with lung disease can do is to STOP SMOKING. Smoking is the number one cause of COPD and can make any kind of lung disease worse. Medications are available that can help a person stop smoking (such as the “patch”). Sometimes, even multiple medications may be needed. Eating a healthy diet, drinking plenty of water and juice, and taking vitamin supplements can make withdrawal easier and less uncomfortable.



People who smoke and have lung disease need extra support and encouragement from family members, friends, and caregivers so that they can stop smoking. Professional counselors can also help. Activities should be planned that reduce depression and stress, which can make a person want to “light up.”