

Traveling with Oxygen



Types of Travel Oxygen

- A compressed oxygen tank is oxygen gas stored in a tank under pressure. Small tanks can be carried.
- A liquid oxygen unit contains oxygen gas cooled to a very low temperature. Most tanks come with a portable unit that you can carry or pull on a cart.
- A portable oxygen concentrator (POC) takes in the air around you to concentrate oxygen and give you more of it. It uses electricity from a battery or by plugging into an outlet.



By Air

- You can use an FAA-approved portable oxygen concentrator (POC). Some airlines offer in-flight oxygen for a fee.
- You can't use compressed gas or liquid oxygen on the plane.
- When you make your reservation, tell the airline that you'll be using oxygen during the flight. You may need to send paperwork from your doctor or fill out the airline's medical form.
- Bring extra POC batteries and your own nasal prongs.
- If you will be using the airline's oxygen system, keep in mind that it's only on the plane, not throughout the airport.
- Arrange for oxygen supplies during layovers and at your destination.



By Bus or Train

- Call the local bus or train office at least three days before you depart. Tell them that you're traveling with oxygen. Ask about their policies. Most bus or train companies allow personal oxygen devices onboard.
- Bring extra oxygen units as baggage, if allowed.
- Carry your oxygen prescription with you.



By Car

- Place the oxygen unit upright. Put it on the floor or on the seat beside you. Secure the unit with a seat belt.
- Don't smoke or let anyone else smoke in the car.
- Keep the windows open at least a crack so air can circulate.
- Don't leave oxygen units in a hot car.

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By Cruise

- When you book your cruise, tell the cruise company that you'll be traveling with oxygen. Most cruise lines require a four- to six-week notice to travel with oxygen.
- Ask your healthcare provider to give the cruise company a letter that includes a brief health history and your oxygen prescription.
- Work with your oxygen supplier to have oxygen units sent to the cruise ship before you depart. Ask the supplier to tell you how many tanks you'll need at ports of call. The supplier may be able to arrange those for you.
- Search online for special cruises for people on oxygen.



Other Considerations

- Being around crowds can increase your risk of getting sick. Consider wearing a mask when you're not using your oxygen. Wash your hands often. Don't use alcohol-based hand sanitizers because they are flammable.
- If you are traveling out of the country, take extra precautions to understand airline policies. If you use a POC, make sure you have the right electrical adapter so you can plug it in.
- Work with a travel agent to help make plans for any travel abroad.
- If you have trouble breathing, appear pale or blue or have chest pain, seek medical attention right away.