

High-Flow Oxygen Inhalation Therapy for Cluster Headaches

100% oxygen inhaled through a face mask

How It Works

Oxygen is given at a high flow rate of 6 to 7 liters a minute for 10 to 20 minutes at the start of a cluster headache.

Why It Is Used

High-flow oxygen inhalation therapy is used to treat cluster headaches. If headache pain is not relieved within 20 minutes, oxygen therapy should be stopped.

High-flow oxygen therapy does not prevent a cluster headache. It only provides temporary relief of headache pain.

How Well It Works

Oxygen therapy is one of the best treatments to stop a cluster headache. Oxygen therapy relieves headache pain within 15 minutes in more than 7 out of 10 people who use it. It works best when started right when a cluster headache starts.

Side Effects

High-flow oxygen inhalation therapy usually causes no side effects. But it may be difficult to sit still to receive oxygen therapy during a painful cluster headache. Other risk factors may include seizures and reduction in hypoxic respiratory drive.

What To Think About

If needed, oxygen can be combined with cluster headache medicines for the most effective treatment. Oxygen also may be combined with preventive medicines to reduce how often you get headaches.

Oxygen may increase the risk of fire if it is used near an open flame. And oxygen cannot be safely stored or used if you are smoking or if you are near a flame of any kind (lit fireplace or gas stove).

Treatment Protocol

1. Place Non Re-breather mask on face.
2. Turn on Oxygen to prescribed liter flow of _____
3. Breathe normally while inhaling oxygen through the mask. Ensure you are sitting during the inhalation therapy.
4. Note the start time with a watch or clock. Duration of treatment should be no greater than _____ minutes
5. Keep a Diary of headache events including time/date, frequency, severity of symptoms and pre-auras if present. Take the Diary with you when you visit the Doctor as it may provide valuable information to guide your treatment.

Learning to effectively manage headaches at home may help reduce the severity and duration of the headache cycles. If your headaches become more severe and medicines are not working, let your doctor know. You may need to try a different medicine or a combination of medicines. You may also need to be referred to a hospital or headache clinic for more intensive treatment.

Patient Name _____

(Please Print)

Patient Signature _____ Date _____

Company Representative _____ Date _____