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# Guide to Choosing the Right Oxygen Concentrator For You





When you first learn that you need supplemental oxygen, you may find yourself feeling overwhelmed with all the new information. Among the things you need to learn about are the various oxygen delivery devices and portable oxygen options available to you. For many patients, an oxygen concentrator is the ideal oxygen delivery source for them, but finding the best oxygen concentrator for you and your needs can feel confusing.

Below, you will find helpful tips for choosing the best portable oxygen concentrator for your needs and how to buy an oxygen concentrator that works for you and your life. Getting used to supplemental oxygen will take some adjustment, but the best portable oxygen concentrator for you helps to improve your life and your ability to participate comfortably in your daily activities.

## What Is Oxygen Therapy and How Does an Oxygen Concentrator Work?

Oxygen therapy is a medical intervention wherein supplemental oxygen is provided to people suffering from short- or long-term conditions that cause shortness of breath or low blood oxygen levels. The higher concentration of oxygen provided during oxygen therapy helps patients better absorb the oxygen their bodies need, helping to improve the symptoms of low blood oxygen and reducing feelings of breathlessness. Oxygen therapy can be delivered in a number of ways, including oxygen tank, liquid oxygen, oxygen concentrator or, in rare cases, hyperbaric chamber. Depending on why you need oxygen, your particular needs, the amount of time you will need oxygen and your mobility, your doctor may recommend different oxygen delivery systems.

The amount of supplemental oxygen you need, as well as the frequency with which you need it, will depend on your particular breathing difficulty. While some patients require supplemental oxygen 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, other patients only need it during exercise or sleep. Whether you need oxygen therapy a few hours a day to improve your blood oxygen levels or feel supplemental oxygen will help relieve your shortness of breath, talk to your doctor about when and how often you might require oxygen therapy.



For many patients, a portable oxygen concentrator makes receiving oxygen therapy significantly easier because it means that you can take your oxygen therapy device with you anywhere you want to go. Though both compressed and liquid oxygen do offer portable options, none are as easy to manage as a portable oxygen concentrator. Oxygen concentrators work by pulling in the air around you, purifying it by removing the nitrogen and other impurities and compressing it to provide an endless supply of purified oxygen as long as you have power. With a power outlet or a fully charged battery, an oxygen concentrator provides as much oxygen as you need, without requiring a refill. This is a significant advantage for those who use supplemental oxygen for many hours a day, or for people who want to continue living an active lifestyle. With an oxygen concentrator, you get the oxygen you need for as long as you need it. You will never have to manage refills or tank replacements, nor will you have to learn to fill small portable tanks. Instead, you just plug in or charge your battery and go.

## Oxygen Tanks vs. Oxygen Concentrators

Though both oxygen tanks and oxygen concentrators can provide medical-grade, therapeutic oxygen, there are significant differences between these two oxygen delivery methods. The first thing to consider is that oxygen tanks contain a finite amount of oxygen. That means you need to monitor the amount you are using in order to plan for when you run out. You will also need to manage getting tank refills or replacements from your oxygen supply company. Though this is not a problem for some patients, many patients find it to be overwhelming and one more thing they have to manage. Moreover, oxygen tanks often operate on continuous flow, which means that oxygen is flowing even when you exhale.

An oxygen concentrator, on the other hand, is able to provide an endless supply of oxygen as long as it has power. Because an oxygen concentrator pulls in the surrounding air, then purifies and compresses it, an oxygen concentrator can provide as much oxygen as needed, without running out. This means you will never need to manage refills or tank replacements, and only need to track your power usage. Additionally, oxygen concentrators generally provide pulse dosing, which means that oxygen is only dispensed on the inhale. This minimizes the risk of creating an oxygen-rich environment. A portable oxygen concentrator also provides the additional advantage of being particularly small and easy to carry, with Inogen One models weighing between 4.8 pounds to 2.8 pounds. With an Inogen One portable oxygen concentrator, you can truly enjoy oxygen anytime, anywhere with ease.





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## Types of Oxygen Concentrators: What Are Your Options?

When it comes to oxygen concentrator options, there are two types to choose from: home oxygen concentrators and portable oxygen concentrators. Though both types operate the same way, by compressing and purifying the surrounding air to provide therapeutic supplemental oxygen, there are differences.



Typically, home oxygen concentrators are larger in size than portable oxygen concentrators. This is because they provide a continuous flow of oxygen, which may be required for certain patients. Inogen's home oxygen concentrator, the Inogen At Home, is still small enough at 18 pounds to be moved around the house as needed, so you are able to experience improved mobility and independence in your home. The Inogen At Home is also extremely energy efficient, so although you will be receiving a continuous flow of oxygen, you will only use 100W of energy at Flow Setting 2. Additionally, the Inogen At Home is quiet enough to carry on a conversation, watch television or read a book without the sound bothering you.

Portable oxygen concentrators, on the other hand, can be surprisingly small, making them easy to bring with you to restaurants, during exercise and even during travel. In fact, the smallest Inogen One model weighs just 2.8 pounds. Portable oxygen concentrators operate using pulse dose technology, which accounts for their smaller size and weight. Many patients who want to be able to use supplemental oxygen at home and on the go purchase portable oxygen concentrator units, as they can be used no matter what the location. As long as you have an AC or DC power source or a fully charged battery, you can enjoy an endless supply of oxygen whenever you need it.

## Process of Choosing a Concentrator: Qualifications

Choosing an oxygen concentrator may seem overwhelming at first, but if you know what to ask, you are less likely to feel lost in the process. First things first: In order to get any kind of supplemental oxygen, you will need a prescription from a health care provider. Medical oxygen must be used under the care of a medical professional, and as such, only a doctor can help you decide if you need oxygen therapy.



There are several things to consider, including what is causing your low blood oxygen or shortness of breath. If you have a chronic lung disease, like COPD or pulmonary fibrosis, oxygen therapy is likely to be just one step in treating your disease and your symptoms. On the other hand, if you have a condition like sleep apnea or hypoxia caused by a specific situation, oxygen therapy may be the first treatment step. Regardless, keep in mind that certain other treatments are not compatible with oxygen therapy. For example, if you currently use a CPAP machine, you are likely ineligible for a portable oxygen concentrator prescription. Depending on your unique health situation,

talk to your doctor about how to best treat your symptoms and whether oxygen therapy with an oxygen concentrator could be a short- or long-term solution for your concerns.

Before you can choose a portable oxygen concentrator, your doctor will need to administer some tests to determine how much oxygen you are currently getting. Generally, you will complete two tests to determine your oxygen levels. First, you will likely complete an oximetry test, a non-invasive test wherein a pulse oximeter is placed on your fingertip and light frequencies determine the oxygen saturation level in the hemoglobin in your blood. If your pulse oximeter reads your oxygen saturation as anything below 95%, your doctor will want to do more tests. An oxygen saturation below 90% is officially considered low.

Following your oximetry test, your doctor will likely order an arterial blood gas study (ABG). This test requires

arterial blood, taken from the radial artery in your wrist, to measure your oxygen and carbon dioxide levels, as well as measuring the pH of your blood. This test helps your doctor understand how well your lungs are functioning, which assists in determining whether oxygen is being properly absorbed into your bloodstream from your lungs while also removing carbon dioxide. A normal ABG oxygen measurement is typically between 75 and 100 mm Hg (millimeters of mercury). An ABG with levels below that would likely trigger a supplemental oxygen prescription. Once your doctor has your blood oxygen levels, Inogen is here to help you navigate the prescription process to make it as easy as possible for you. Understanding your diagnosis along with a brand new oxygen prescription can be overwhelming and potentially confusing, and we are here to help you along the way. Once your testing is complete and you know you will need supplemental oxygen, give us a call at 1-800-695-7915 to get more information about getting your oxygen prescription and purchasing, or renting, a portable oxygen concentrator. We can help facilitate the prescription process directly with your doctor, while helping you fully understand your supplemental oxygen prescription and how to use it with your portable oxygen concentrator.

Once your doctor has prescribed supplemental oxygen, you should discuss what kind of oxygen concentrator is ideal for your needs. You will need to ask whether your doctor would like you to use a continuous flow or pulse dose system, as well as what flow setting you will need, how frequently your settings are expected to change and the length and frequency with which you will need to use oxygen. You should also consider whether you will need to travel with your supplemental oxygen, and at what times of day you will need to use it. Inogen can also help answer many of these questions for you, once you have your test results and a clear diagnosis for your oxygen needs. Once you know what your oxygen prescription will look like, you can discuss with your doctor whether a home or portable oxygen concentrator would be right for you. Contact Inogen to discover which of Inogen's innovative oxygen concentrator products can help improve your quality of life and treat your symptoms most effectively. Remember, since medical oxygen can only be obtained with a medical prescription, you will not be able to purchase portable oxygen concentrator units without seeing a doctor first, but we can help you with the process every step of the way.

## **Process of Choosing a Concentrator: Contacting Inogen**

Inogen was founded on the belief that oxygen therapy should improve patients' quality of life, rather than impede it.

As such, Inogen is committed to making the process of helping you choose and purchase a portable oxygen concentrator as easy as possible. Our goal is to free you from heavy and awkward oxygen tanks and provide you with portable oxygen options so you can live the life you want while receiving oxygen therapy. Inogen products are made to be easily portable, helping improve your freedom, mobility and independence. But you are not alone in helping choose the right product for you. Call us today to speak with Inogen representatives who can help answer your questions and give you guidance when you are choosing the best oxygen concentrator for you.

Once you select and buy, or rent, your oxygen concentrator, we also offer additional support to ensure that you are comfortable with your oxygen concentrator. We provide product setup videos, manual access online, easy equipment return and access to all the best oxygen concentrator accessories to help make your oxygen therapy experience the best it can be. Buy oxygen concentrator replacement parts quickly and easily, right from our website.

We developed our first oxygen concentrator to make oxygen therapy better for a beloved grandmother named Mae, and we strive to do the same for each of our customers. Inogen is an award-winning Accredited Homecare provider, so you get a high quality product from the original innovators and experts in the field, while also being able to bill Medicare or other insurance.

Find out more about how we can support you in choosing the best portable oxygen concentrator for you with our intuitive process. [Contact us today.](#)



## Key Features to Consider

To make your final selection for the best portable oxygen concentrator for you, there are a number of different features you will want to consider. Here are features offered by Inogen's portable oxygen options and why you may choose one over the other.



**Noise Level:** When you are attempting to choose the best oxygen concentrator for your needs, think about how an oxygen concentrator may affect your daily life. People with an active social life or a love of television and movies will be pleased to learn that Inogen oxygen concentrators are incredibly quiet. All Inogen models produce 40dBA or less on Setting 2, which is about the same amount of noise produced in a library or by a babbling brook. In other words, all of Inogen's portable oxygen options allow you to hear what you want to hear without the sound of your oxygen concentrator getting in the way.



**Portability:** As you search for the best portable oxygen concentrator, the portability of the unit is likely to be at the top of your list. Each Inogen One model weighs less than 5 pounds, and the Inogen One G4 comes in at just 2.8 pounds! Every Inogen One model is also incredibly small, making any model easy to carry around with you. The Inogen One G4 is our smallest and lightest weight model, so if you are looking for the smallest oxygen concentrator, this model is for you. Regardless, every Inogen One unit can be carried easily in one of our carefully designed bags to make getting your oxygen therapy on the go as easy as possible.



**Flow Rate Settings:** Your flow rate settings will be determined by your doctor and written into your prescription. You may require just one setting all the time, or you may need to adjust your flow settings depending on your activity or when you use your oxygen concentrator. Each Inogen oxygen concentrator offers at least 3 flow settings, so you can make the adjustments you need. If you need a variety of flow settings, the Inogen One G5 offers the most flow rate variety with 6 separate settings.



**Flow Dosing:** Your doctor will decide whether you need continuous flow oxygen, which is available from our Inogen At Home home oxygen concentrator, or whether pulse dosing is right for you. All of our Inogen One portable oxygen concentrator models offer pulse dosing, so oxygen is only dosed as needed on the inhale.





**Inogen Connect:** Depending on your comfort level with technology, you may want more or less technology available to you with your oxygen concentrator. Both our Inogen One G4 and Inogen One G5 models offer Inogen Connect capability, which allows you to monitor your portable oxygen concentrator through a supported device with our free mobile app and incorporated Bluetooth. You can check your battery life, monitor the status of various parts, access software updates and user manuals, access FAQs and troubleshooting tips, get special discounts and promotions and get maintenance reminders to help keep your unit operating at its best. With Inogen Connect, you can enjoy the peace of mind that comes with seeing that your oxygen concentrator is functioning as it should.



**Intelligent Delivery Technology®:** Intelligent Delivery Technology is incorporated into each Inogen One model to ensure that your oxygen is delivered efficiently and effectively to you in all modes of use. The Inogen One is clinically validated to provide the oxygen you need during activity as well as during sleep, because it actively responds to changing respiratory rates and adjusts the bolus size delivered to you.



**Battery Life:** The life of your oxygen concentrator battery is probably important to you, particularly if you travel frequently. The battery life varies for each of our Inogen One models and the life of each battery will vary depending on the flow setting you use. Higher flow settings will use your battery faster, while lower flow settings allow for a longer battery life. However, no matter what your flow setting, keep in mind that the life of your battery can be nearly doubled with a double battery. If you feel most comfortable with the longest battery life possible, or if you travel frequently, the Inogen One G5's single battery lasts up to 6.5 hours, with a double battery lasting up to an astonishing 13 hours. Our smallest model, the Inogen One G4, still offers excellent battery life with a single battery lasting up to 2.7 hours and a double battery up to 5 hours. It is important to be aware that environmental factors contribute to the life of your battery as well. To maintain maximum run-time of your battery, avoid running your oxygen concentrator in temperatures below 40°F or above 95°F for extended periods of time. It is also important not to charge your oxygen concentrator battery in temperatures exceeding 75°F. Consider battery life when choosing the best portable oxygen concentrator for you.



**Price:** Price is a serious consideration when it is time to buy an oxygen concentrator, but remember that the more you use your oxygen concentrator, the lower the price gets over time. You never have to pay for refills or tank replacements like you would with compressed or liquid oxygen. With an oxygen concentrator, the price is upfront with very few costs afterward. Inogen oxygen concentrators truly pay for themselves in effectiveness and improved freedom and independence. The Inogen At Home is our lowest priced unit, while our Inogen One models are all very close in price. If the price of a brand new unit is difficult for you, contact Inogen to discuss rentals or insurance coverage. Refurbished units are also available at a lower price point, but it is essential that you only purchase a refurbished unit from an accredited company for your own safety.



**Safety:** When it comes to safety, oxygen concentrators are a cut above other oxygen delivery systems. While there is still an increased risk of fire since oxygen facilitates combustion, there is a significantly lower chance of creating an oxygen-rich environment with an oxygen concentrator, particularly one that uses pulse dosing. Still, it is important to keep your distance from open flames and heat sources when using an oxygen concentrator, and never use the device in a small enclosed space. Make sure your concentrator is properly ventilated and follow all manufacturer's instructions. When used safely and correctly, oxygen concentrators are extremely safe.



**Warranty:** Each Inogen oxygen concentrator comes with a 3-Year Warranty. However, you can opt to purchase one of our Freedom Packages for any of our portable oxygen concentrators, which comes with a Lifetime Warranty, as well as extra batteries. You can also opt to purchase a Freedom Bundle, the all-in-one solution to meet your oxygen therapy needs, whether you're on the go or at home. The Freedom Bundle offers the best of both worlds with a choice of either the G4 or G5 Inogen One portable oxygen concentrator (which comes with a Lifetime Warranty with the bundle), as well as the innovative Inogen At Home concentrator for home oxygen therapy. Enjoy the improved freedom of a home unit and portable unit, allowing you to get the oxygen therapy you need exactly as you need it.

## Making Your Final Selection

Once you have seen your doctor and they have prescribed supplemental oxygen as a medical necessity, call us at **1-800-695-7915** to review the different models, discuss what you need from an oxygen concentrator and learn how the features of each model can best meet your oxygen needs.

Once you've completed these steps, we can facilitate the oxygen concentrator prescription process by faxing our prescription form over to your doctor to sign and return to us.

If you are unsure about the best oxygen concentrator for you, discuss the portable oxygen options you are considering with your doctor, and feel free to contact Inogen anytime for more information.

Inogen's ultimate goal is to improve your quality of life by providing oxygen products that increase your independence, freedom and mobility. We are here to support you in choosing the oxygen concentrator that best fits your needs. When you purchase portable oxygen concentrator units or accessories from us, we work hard to make the process easy, so you can get back to enjoying your life. Breathe better and discover how Inogen can improve your life today.

**Oxygen.  
Anytime.  
Anywhere.®**

