

Medical Aids Subsidy Scheme (MASS)

Home Oxygen

Frequently Asked Questions

Q1. What does MASS do?

- MASS provides access to subsidy funding for the provision of MASS endorsed aids and equipment to eligible Queensland residents with permanent and stabilised conditions or disabilities.

Q2. Does MASS provide subsidy funding assistance towards home oxygen?

- Yes, the range of MASS aids and equipment is selected to assist people to live at home and avoid premature or inappropriate residential care or hospitalisation.
- MASS **does not** provide portable oxygen to adults for community access.

Q3. What type of oxygen equipment does MASS provide?

- MASS provides assistance in the form of a concentrator (machine that runs on electricity which generates oxygen from the air) and/or pre-filled cylinders.
- MASS provides a number of accessories including nasal cannulae, masks, tubing and swivel connectors, trolleys, crates, carry bags and restraints.
- MASS may also provide emergency back-up large or portable cylinders for people who are dependent on oxygen for 24 hours per day or who are in a life threatening situation in the event of a power failure.

Q4. Am I eligible for MASS subsidy funding assistance for oxygen?

- You may be eligible for assistance if you are a permanent resident of Queensland, have a permanent and stabilised condition or disability and hold a pensioner concession card, health care card or Queensland Government Seniors Card in your own right.
- You will also need to meet the MASS clinical eligibility criteria for home oxygen which are based on recommendations of the Thoracic Society of Australia and New Zealand (TSANZ) and the MASS Oxygen Clinical Advisory Committee (OCAC).
- Your medical specialist can advise whether you are eligible to apply for MASS subsidised assistance for home oxygen.

Q5. Who can clinically assess me for MASS subsidised home oxygen?

- To apply for MASS subsidised home oxygen, you must be clinically assessed by a medical specialist who can apply to MASS on your behalf.
- Depending on your condition, your medical specialist must be from one of the following MASS designated medical specialist groups: thoracic physician, specialist physician, oncologist, palliative care physician, cardiologist, neurologist, paediatric thoracic physician or neonatologist.
- Additionally, if you live in a remote area, you may be clinically assessed by your medical practitioner (for adults) or paediatrician (for children under 16 years of age) as long as they get endorsement from a medical specialist from one of the above medical specialist groups.

Q6. Can I get MASS subsidised home oxygen if I am a current smoker?

- No, smoking compromises the benefit of oxygen therapy and is an extreme fire and safety risk.
- For the safety of our clients and others, MASS will not subsidy fund oxygen to anyone who is a current smoker. You will need to have quit smoking prior to making application to MASS.
- You must also never allow others to smoke in the vicinity of your oxygen or use your oxygen near sources of sparks, open flames, heat sources or flammable products.

Q7. Do I need to reapply to MASS to continue using my oxygen?

- Yes, if you are an adult (sixteen years of age and over), you will need to reapply four months after initially receiving MASS subsidised oxygen. Further reapplications are required annually.
- Children between six and fifteen years of age will need to reapply six months after the initial application. Further reassessments are required annually.
- Children under six years of age will need to reapply every six months until they turn six years of age when annual reassessments only are required.

Q8. Do I need to see my medical specialist to reapply to MASS?

- You will need to see your medical specialist for your four month review application. You should ensure that an appointment has been made with your medical specialist around 3-4 months after initially being supplied with your MASS subsidised oxygen.
- You do not need to see your medical specialist for subsequent annual reapplications. Your medical practitioner **or** medical specialist can apply to MASS on your behalf for all annual reapplications.
- MASS will provide you with a reminder letter and a blank reapplication form approximately three months prior to your annual reapplication due date.
- Children under 16 years of age **are required** to see their medical specialist for six monthly and annual reapplications. However, if they live in a remote area, their medical practitioner or paediatrician are able to apply to MASS on their behalf with endorsement from a MASS designated medical specialist prescriber as listed on page 1.

Q9. What forms do I need to apply for MASS subsidised oxygen?

- For adults, the MASS 45 application form is used for the first application and for the subsequent four month review application. The MASS 46 re-application form is used for all subsequent annual reapplications.
- For children under 16 years of age, the MASS 47 application form is used for the first application and for the subsequent six month and annual reapplications.

Q10. Who can fill out my application form?

- You need to read, understand and retain Part A of the MASS application form.
- You can complete Parts B and D of the MASS application form.
- Your medical specialist or medical practitioner needs to complete **Part C** of the MASS application form.

Q11. How do I know when my next renewal application is due?

- The due date for your next reapplication will be on your last approval letter for MASS subsidised oxygen.

- MASS will also send you a reminder letter and a blank reapplication form approximately three months prior to your annual reapplication due date.

Q12. What will happen if I do not submit my renewal application on time?

- If completed application forms are not received by MASS, payment for ongoing oxygen beyond the MASS approved funding periods will become your responsibility.
- You must contact MASS to request an extension if there are any reasons why your reapplication will be delayed.

Q13. Am I eligible for back-up oxygen cylinders in situations when my concentrator breaks down or my power goes out?

- If you receive a MASS subsidised oxygen concentrator, you may be eligible for back-up oxygen cylinders if you:
 - are in a life threatening situation in the event of a power failure, and/or
 - are dependent on oxygen for 24 hours per day.
- To receive MASS subsidised back-up oxygen, you will need to be assessed by your medical specialist who can submit a request to MASS on your behalf.

Q14. When does MASS pay to refill my back-up cylinder/s?

- MASS will arrange to refill your back-up cylinder/s once every six months upon request.

Q15. Can I use my MASS supplied back-up portable oxygen for use outside my home?

- MASS provides back-up oxygen for use in emergencies only. You should always have filled back-up cylinder/s available to use at any time in the event of power failure. These cylinders will only be replaced by MASS once every six months, although you may arrange to re-fill these cylinders at your own cost.
- However, you may use the regulator and flow meter that MASS provided with your back-up portable cylinders for use with privately rented portable cylinders.

Q16. Where can I privately rent my own portable oxygen cylinders?

- You should consider a variety of oxygen suppliers (listed in your phone book) to obtain the best service and price for your circumstances.
- You should consider costs associated with monthly rental, cylinder refills and delivery of the oxygen to your home. You may find it more economical to make arrangements to collect refilled cylinders from the supplier yourself.
- You are not obliged to privately rent portable oxygen from the same company that is supplying your MASS funded equipment.

Q17. How often should I replace my nasal cannulae?

- If you are an adult, you should replace your nasal cannula every month.
- A child under 16 years of age, should replace their nasal cannula twice per month.
- Contact your MASS oxygen supplier for complimentary replacement nasal cannulae. Your supplier's phone number is displayed on your oxygen equipment.

Q18. Am I eligible to receive a subsidy for my electricity from the Queensland Government if I use a MASS subsidised concentrator?

- Yes. You would have received an 'Electricity Life Support Concession' form from MASS when your application for a MASS subsidised concentrator was initially approved. This form needs to be completed and sent to the Queensland Department

of Communities, Electricity Life Support Concessions Unit provide assistance and will arrange a subsidy to be deposited into your nominated bank account each quarter.

- Contact the Electricity Life Support Concessions Unit on 131304 for more information.
- Q19. Can I power my oxygen concentrator with my household generator in the event of power failure?**
- You may be able to power your oxygen concentrator with a generator. However, you must contact your oxygen supplier for details on minimum generator specifications.
- Q20. My concentrator makes a noise which makes it hard to sleep at night. What can I do?**
- Your oxygen supplier should have provided you with enough tubing so that you can move around most areas of your home without having to move your concentrator. Try leaving your concentrator in another room while you sleep.
- Q21. What do I do if my oxygen equipment breaks down?**
- If you have any problems with your oxygen equipment, immediately phone your oxygen supplier and they will be able to assist you.
 - Your oxygen supplier can be contacted 24 hours per day, seven days per week. The phone number of your oxygen supplier is displayed on your oxygen equipment.
- Q22. How often should my oxygen equipment be tested and maintained?**
- Your oxygen supplier is required to perform a maintenance check of your oxygen equipment every twelve months.
 - This may involve a maintenance officer coming to your home to perform the maintenance check or the supplier may deliver newly tested equipment to your home to replace your old equipment.
- Q23. Can I travel with my oxygen equipment?**
- Contact your oxygen supplier and/or transport company for verbal and written instruction on safe travel with your oxygen.
 - MASS may be able to assist you with oxygen supplies at your travel destination if you are required to travel away from home for *medical* reasons for an extended period of time. Contact MASS for details.
- Q24. What flow-rate should I have my oxygen set on?**
- Your medical specialist and/or visiting community nurse should have advised you of the flow rate setting for your oxygen equipment. If in doubt, contact your medical specialist or visiting community nurse.
- Q25. How long should I use my oxygen for each day?**
- Your medical specialist and/or visiting community nurse should have advised how many hours per day you should use your oxygen.
 - As a general rule, prescriptions are usually:
 - continuous 24 hrs per day oxygen
 - at least 16 hrs per day oxygen
 - supplemental oxygen needed during sleep periods only
 - supplemental oxygen needed during exercise or activity only.
 - If in doubt, contact your medical specialist or visiting community nurse.

Q26. Will my condition improve if I reduce my oxygen usage each day?

- No, you will receive maximum benefit from your oxygen therapy by following the plan that your medical specialist has made with you. You should use the oxygen at the correct flow rate and for at least the number of hours recommended by your medical specialist.
- If you have forgotten the flow rate and hourly usage recommended by your medical specialist, contact your medical specialist or visiting community nurse.

Q27. What do I do if my condition worsens or improves?

- If your condition changes for any reason, you must consult your medical specialist or your medical practitioner as your oxygen requirements may also have changed.
- It is important not to change your flow rate without advice from your medical specialist or medical practitioner.

Q28. How do I find out more about my oxygen therapy?

- MASS has provided you with a small, blue '*Handbook for Home Oxygen Therapy - 2009*' which contains useful information regarding your home oxygen therapy. This handbook, along with other helpful information, is available on the MASS website at www.health.qld.gov.au/mass.
- For further information, consult your visiting community nurse, your medical practitioner and/or your medical specialist.