

## Simplifying and Improving Patient Care – as printed in the October 2012 Issue of Advance for Respiratory & Sleep Care



### CASE STUDY: Oxygen Masks

Adjustable oxygen flow, quick assessments, and easy adjustments find favor with RTs and nurses.

By Lisa Kinler, RRT

St. Tammany Parish Hospital in Covington, La. was introduced to OxyMask™ approximately five years ago by our specialty respiratory distributor. We always are looking for new technology and innovation that will allow our therapists and nurses to provide better care to patients in a cost-effective manner. When I saw the OxyMask™, I immediately was impressed by its simple and safe design; and the fact that one mask could deliver a full range of flows to meet a patient's oxygen requirement.

We initiated a trial of the OxyMask™ with several of our patients who already were on mask oxygen. The patients immediately commented that they didn't feel so claustrophobic with this mask. Nurses loved that they could understand what their patients were saying. They also appreciated that patients could take sips of water through the straw without taking the mask off and having their oxygen saturation fall. It was very easy for our physicians, nurses, and therapists to adjust the flow of oxygen to achieve the desired saturation. The ability to adjust oxygen levels using a single mask by adjusting the flow was a logical extension of our oxygen protocol for nasal cannulas. The physicians would order a desired SaO<sub>2</sub>, and then the

therapist would assess the patient and use the appropriate device.

The OxyMask™ had a large impact on our post-anesthesia care unit (PACU), where nurses are responsible for setting up oxygen for their patients. The nurses frequently used to find themselves having to try up to three different devices to either increase or reduce the amount of oxygen the patient was receiving. With the switch to OxyMask™, they now use one device for the patient and simply adjust the flow to achieve the ordered or desired oxygen level. Not only was patient care improved and nursing care simplified, we also saved money by reducing the number of masks that were used in the PACU area.

St. Tammany Parish Hospital has been a strong advocate of protocols. Our oxygen therapy protocol coupled with a respiratory therapist's assessment of a patient's requirement allows us to determine whether the patient will be placed on a nasal cannula or the OxyMask™. Simple cannulas, OxyMask™, and high-flow heated/humidified cannulas meet the needs of the bulk of our patient population. We have kept a few non-rebreathing masks in inventory, but we find that if OxyMask™ doesn't meet the patient's need, then they probably are going to need a high-flow heated/humidified cannula, CPAP or NIV.

Our therapists also love the OxyTrach™. It allows simple and safe transport of patients who have a tracheotomy.

time searching for and putting together a system for those patients.

In my experience, the two major improvements in oxygen therapy have been the high-flow heated/humidified nasal cannula and the OxyMask™. These two devices literally have eliminated the need for any other oxygen mask at our facility. It is easy for us to order, stock, and use the reduced number of items.

By using OxyMask™ products, our patients' needs are met in a comfortable and safe manner. We never have to worry about a flow inadvertently being set too low on a conventional mask and causing rebreathing of CO<sub>2</sub>. Nursing can communicate easily with patients without interrupting their oxygen therapy. Our therapists can assess and apply the required oxygen device and flow quickly and efficiently. We are very happy that we have chosen OxyMask™ as our only oxygen mask for patients at St. Tammany Parish Hospital.



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