Tricky Topics in Nursing
Oxygen administration

Narrator:
Oxygen is a prescribed treatment for hypoxaemia. Any person receiving oxygen should be assessed and monitored with a view to reducing and discontinuing the oxygen therapy when it is no longer needed.

Before starting the procedure, you must gather all the equipment you need, assess the needs of the person and check the prescription chart for the correct parameters.

Some patients with hypoxaemia may be slightly confused. You should adapt your communication style as needed and explain the procedure to the person in clear accessible language, gaining their informed consent.

Perform hand hygiene and don relevant PPE.

Oxygen can be administered in different health care settings – acute and long term, including in the person's home.

The oxygen prescription should set parameters for the method of administration, the amount to be given and the target oxygen saturation levels. The ability to wean the oxygen as the person's needs alter is important. The target oxygen saturation levels will vary depending upon whether the person has a chronic respiratory condition or an acute illness. Ongoing monitoring of observations and regular oral care are important aspects of care.

Devices and flow rates

Low – medium concentrations are given via nasal cannulae directly into the person's nostrils. The flow rate on the flow meter should be less than 4 litres / minute.

A simple oxygen mask can be used instead of a nasal cannula. The flow rate should be 5 litres/minute.

The venturi mask system allows for different concentrations of oxygen to be given by mask.

The venturi valves are colour coded and flow rates vary according to concentration required.

Medium and higher concentrations of oxygen are often humidified as the gas can dry and irritate the mucous membranes.

Concentrations higher than the venturi system can be given by a non rebreathe mask. These are generally used in emergency situations where a higher level of monitoring is required.

Oxygen can be given to children and young people using the systems previously discussed. Neonates and young babies may receive oxygen in incubators or using head box systems.

Remember to always work within your expected performance level and under the supervision of a registered professional.

Also remember, ongoing monitoring observations and regular oral care are important aspects of care.

Thank you for watching this video on oxygen administration. We hope you found it useful.