

Oxygen bars have experts worried

Can lead to toxicity in central nervous system, pneumonia

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The new trend to catch up with the health conscious city dwellers, the oxygen bar, or oxy spa as it is popularly known, has got health experts worried. There is no scientific evidence to prove the long term health benefits of inhaling pure oxygen. Instead it could lead to toxicity in the central nervous system and pneumonia.

"The air we breathe in contains 21 per cent oxygen. The haemoglobin in the blood stream converts this to 99 per cent after it leaves the lungs which is sufficient for our body," Vikram Jaggi, Medical Director of Asthma and Chest Allergy Centre at New Delhi said.

"Inhaling pure oxygen

does not have any known health benefits. The feel-good effect after inhaling oxygen is only psychological," he added.

In fact, an over-dose of oxygen can result in toxicity in the central nervous system and damage the eyes and brain. Further oxygen concentrators have filters where

bacteria can grow. "Using these concentrators can cause lipid pneumonia," Jaggi said.

Oxygen bars use pressure swing absorption technology to extract oxygen from the atmosphere, concentrating it to up to 95 per cent purity and delivering it to the infuser. It is purified by adding water vapour to it. The oxygen is

then mixed with scented oils.

"Since oxygen by itself is uncomfortable to breathe, fragrance is added to it through an infuser before it is conveyed to the end user," Vidushi, a health expert with Health Sanctuary that runs a chain of health centres including oxygen bars, said.

"The tube is fitted with a

Brand name	Essential oil used	Claimed effects
Fresh Air	Grapefruit, mandarin orange, pine	A breath ideal to fight a cold
Himalaya	Eucalyptus, peppermint, ravensara	Helps to quit smoking
Oriental Prince	Ylang-ylang, nutmeg	Stimulates immune system
Voluptuous	Lavender, mandarin, ylang-ylang	Relaxing and appeasing
Vitality	Ginger, peppermint, lemon	Helps to refresh, fights
headaches		



disposable cannula, a two-pronged tube that fits loosely into the nostrils and is hooked over the ears. It is just like the ones used for hospital patients," she added.

A single 15-minute 'shoot' of pure oxygen inhaled by the client is believed to boost the immune system, help to quit smoking and rejuvenate the body. "Oxygen bars target the wealthy customers who pay up to one thousand rupees per session," another health expert working with Health Sanctuary said.

"There is a regular clientele for the oxygen bar," Rif Husain, Marketing Head of Health Sanctuary said. "The bar is regularly used by working women, housewives, marathon runners and students preparing for competitive exams," he added.