

Community Respiratory Specialist Team

Using Fan Therapy to Manage Breathlessness



**Information for people in our care,
relatives, and carers.**

Service Hours: 9am – 5pm

Telephone: 0300 124 5909



Service provided by

Sirona
care & health

Introduction

This information is designed to help you manage stable long-term breathlessness. If your breathing is getting worse, or you are experiencing breathlessness as a new feeling, it is important to seek medical advice from your GP. Call 999 if your breathlessness is so bad that you cannot speak in a full sentence.

Will using a fan help my breathlessness?

When breathless you may instinctively go to an open door or window to 'get some fresh air'. In a similar way, a cool draught of air from a hand-held fan can reduce the feeling of breathlessness. The fan can therefore be seen as a 'portable breath of fresh air'.

The following may also help ease breathlessness:

- a cool flannel or cool water mist spray to the face.
- opening windows, for example in a car.
- desktop or floor standing fans.

How does facial cooling ease breathlessness?

Research has shown that cooling the face with a fan is effective at reducing breathlessness. It is thought that cooling the cheeks, nose and mouth areas sends a message to the brain which reduces the feeling of breathlessness.

How should I use the hand-held fan?

Adopt a comfortable position that eases your breathlessness and:

1. Hold the fan approximately 15 centimetres (six inches) away from the face.
2. Aim the draught of air towards your face and move the fan slowly side to side so the draught covers the nose, mouth and sides of the cheeks.
3. Use it until you feel your breathing ease.

Some people will have to use the fan for just a minute, others for 10 minutes, before they feel their breathlessness ease.

If you are prescribed home oxygen, the fan can be used at the same time as nasal oxygen. People using face mask oxygen have commented that cooling the cheeks, neck and upper chest with the fan helps to ease their breathing.

When should I use the fan?

You can use the fan whenever you feel breathless. Keep the fan in your pocket when out and about so you have it to hand when needed, or by your bedside so it is in easy reach if you wake at night.

You may find it helpful to use the fan with other breathlessness management techniques such as positioning, breathing techniques or relaxation.

Contact details:

Telephone: 0300 124 5909

Let us know what you think and get involved.

Telephone: 0300 124 5300*

Email: sirona.hello@nhs.net

Website: [Link to Sirona website \(sirona-cic.org.uk\)](http://sirona-cic.org.uk)

*Calls from landlines are charged up to 10p per minute; calls from mobiles vary, please check with your network provider. This is not a premium-rate number.

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