

If you have any other questions not covered by our information sheets please ask your physiotherapist, occupational therapist or doctor.



## Breathlessness

*Information for patients*

This information is to help you to learn how to manage your breathlessness. If you feel that your usual level of breathlessness has changed in any way, or has suddenly got worse please seek advice from your GP.

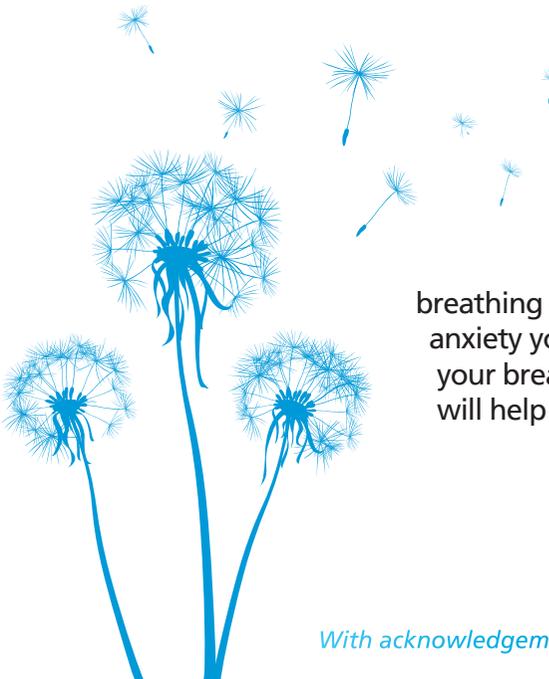
There are some common questions that most people who suffer long term breathing problems will ask. For example:

## Is being breathless harmful to me?

Breathlessness is not harmful but it can be very frightening. You should try to continue to be as active as your illness will allow you. We will try to offer advice to help you manage your breathing through information leaflets and support.

## Is there anything I can do to help with the feelings of fear and anxiety?

Breathlessness can make you feel frightened and anxious which, in turn, can make your breathing worse.



It is important to remind yourself that breathlessness itself is not dangerous and that you have recovered from these episodes before. We hope to introduce or remind you of techniques you can use to reduce anxiety and control it. These may include relaxation, positioning and breathing exercises. If you can reduce your anxiety you will also feel more in control of your breathing. There are other leaflets which will help you with this.

*With acknowledgement BIS, Cambridge*

## Is there anything else I can do to help my breathlessness?

**Cool air** – having the sensation of air moving can help to reduce breathlessness. An open window, large fan in the room, or a small hand held fan are all useful. A cold flannel can also help.

**Planning your activities** –It is helpful to decide what activities are important for you to complete during a day and not to try to do too much at once. Do not be afraid to ask for help with things that you find particularly difficult. Many people find this frustrating, but it will help you to save energy to enjoy the activities that are important to you.

**Pace your activity** –give yourself time and rest when you need it. Activity will make you breathless but this is normal. Make sure that you are in control of your breathing before you do any activity that you know will make you breathless and try to arrange furniture in convenient places so that you can rest as needed. Practising exercises for breathing control and using relaxed positions may also help.

An occupational therapist or physiotherapist may be able to help you with this and we have other information sheets to help to remind you.

**Remember that you should continue to be as active as you can.**

## Medicines

There may also be some medicines that your doctor can prescribe to help with your breathlessness. It is important that you discuss with them how to use these to have the best effect.

## Will oxygen be helpful?

Oxygen may help some people but may not be suitable for everyone. Often, trying some of the other techniques suggested to you can help you manage your breathlessness more quickly.

You can discuss this with your doctor and they may refer you for assessment if it is appropriate .