

## Palliative Care Team

### Breathlessness Intervention Service

## Fact sheet three – Handheld fan

The information given below is designed to help you manage your 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.

### Will using a fan help my breathlessness?

- A cool draft of air from a handheld fan has been found to be very helpful in reducing the feeling of breathlessness.
- You may also find that the following can also help ease breathlessness:
  - desktop or floor standing fans
  - opening windows, for example in the car, to allow a cool draft of air to enter
  - Some people like to use a cool flannel or compress on their face.

### How should I use the handheld fan?

- Fans with three or more rotating blades seem to be most effective.
- When you feel breathless adopt a comfortable position. You can discuss this with your physiotherapist or doctor for further advice.
- Hold your fan approximately six inches or 15cms from your face (or the distance you find most helpful).
- Aim the draft of air towards the central part of your face so that you feel the draught around the sides of your nose and above your top lip.
- You should feel the benefit within a few minutes.



## Is using a handheld fan safe?

- You can use your fan for as long and as frequently as you wish and there are no known problems associated with using it. You may find it helpful to use your fan if you stop for a 'breather' whilst moving or walking and for sudden breathlessness when you are still.

(Ref : Cold Facial Stimulation Reduces Breathlessness Induced in Normal Subjects. Swartzstein et al)

For further help and advice contact the Palliative Care Team on 01223 274404, 09:00 to 17:00 Monday to Friday.



We are currently working towards a smoke free site. Smoking is only permitted in the designated smoking areas.

For advice and support in quitting, contact your GP or the free NHS stop smoking helpline on 0800 169 0 169

### Help with this leaflet:



If you would like this information in another language, large print or audio format, please ask the department to contact Patient Information: 01223 216032 or

[patient.information@addenbrookes.nhs.uk](mailto:patient.information@addenbrookes.nhs.uk)



### Document history

Authors	Clinical Specialist Physiotherapist
Department	Cambridge University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, Hills Road, Cambridge, CB2 0QQ <a href="http://www.cuh.org.uk">www.cuh.org.uk</a>
Contact number	01223 586703
Publish/Review date	January 2011/January 2014
File name	Handhels_fans.doc
Version number/Ref	4/PIN1053