



Health Newsletter

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HANDHELD FAN CAN HELP MANAGE BREATHLESSNESS

Research studies suggest that a cool draft of air from a handheld fan can help reduce the feeling of breathlessness in a patient.

The study, 'Does the use of a handheld fan improve chronic dyspnea? A randomized, controlled, crossover trial' (2010), recommends the technique as part of a palliative management strategy for reducing breathlessness associated with advanced disease.

The study supports anecdotal evidence that a handheld fan directed to the face reduces the sensation of breathlessness.

Ruth Thomas, Specialist Respiratory Nurse base in Milton Keynes, says: "I frequently use hand held fans during pulmonary rehabilitation sessions, giving them to patients who are very breathless after a cardiac exercise, aids recovery time even quicker than use of inhalers. Patients who benefit are advised to use as needed whenever more breathless than usual to help regain breathing control."

The same relief can be replicated by desktop or standing fans, an open window or a cool flannel compressed against the face.

There are on-going studies and further research projects investigating the effectiveness of the technique and how it works. At the moment it is thought that cooling the cheeks, nose and mouth sends a message to the brain which reduces the feeling of breathlessness. It may stimulate a similar response as to when people dive into cold water, prompting the body to conserve oxygen.

Whatever the reason why the handheld fan technique works and eases breathlessness, it is a safe and simple way to help patients.

The fans are inexpensive, portable, enhance self-efficacy and give the patient some sense of control over their breathing.

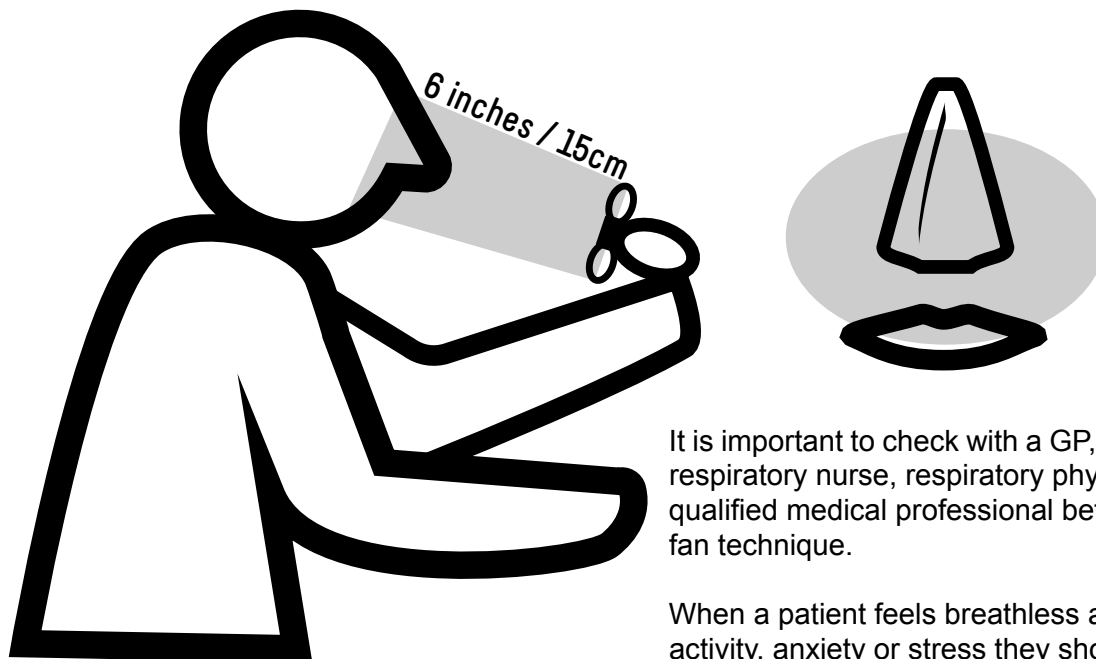
**WIN 10
HANDHELD
FANS TO GIVE
TO YOUR
PATIENTS
(SEE PAGE 3)**



Breathlessness is a key symptom of the asbestos related diseases pleural thickening, asbestosis, pleural fibrosis, lung cancer and mesothelioma. Simply walking from one room to the next or tying a shoelace can leave a sufferer struggling to breathe. It has a huge impact on the quality of life of sufferers and any safe technique that can help should be used to help patients.

Go to page 2 to see how to use a handheld fan to relieve breathlessness and research references.

How to use the handheld fan to relieve breathlessness?

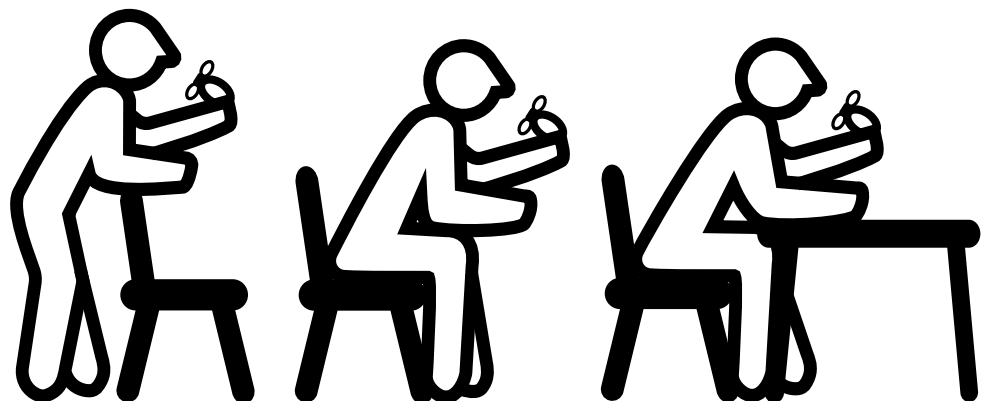


It is important to check with a GP, respiratory consultant, respiratory nurse, respiratory physiotherapist or other qualified medical professional before a patient uses the fan technique.

When a patient feels breathless after any physical activity, anxiety or stress they should:

- Find a comfortable place to stop and rest. This could be in a chair and leaning forward on the elbows; sitting and resting forward on a table top; or standing and leaning forward on a kitchen worktop, back of a chair or even a shopping trolley.
- Turn the handheld fan on and position it six inches or 15 cm (about the distance from the outstretched tip of the forefinger to the top of the thumb) from the face.
- Ensure that the air from the fan blows towards the central part of the face. The cool draught should be felt around the sides of the nose and across the patient's top lip.
- The position should be held and the fan used until the patient regains control of their breathing. This could be a few minutes through to 10 minutes. The time varies depending on the patient.

It may benefit the patient to use the fan while employing other methods of breathing management such as breathing techniques, relaxation and mindfulness. The fan technique can also be used at the same time as nasal oxygen.



References:

Galbraith S, Fagan P, Perkins P, Lynch A, Booth S. Does the use of a handheld fan improve chronic dyspnea? A randomized, controlled, crossover trial. *Journal of Pain & Symptom Management* 2010; 39 (5):831-838.

Richard M. Schwartzstein, Karen Lahive, Alan Pope, Steven E. Weinberger, and J. Woodrow Weiss. Cold Facial Stimulation Reduces Breathlessness Induced in Normal Subjects. *American Review of Respiratory Disease* 1986; 10.1164/ ajrccm/136.1.58

Amy P. Abernethy, Christine F. McDonald, Peter A. Frith, Katherine Clark, James E. Herndon, Jennifer Marcello, Iven H. Young, Janet Bull, Andrew Wilcock, Sara Booth, Jane L. Wheeler, James A. Tulsky, Alan J. Crockett, and David C. Currow. Effect of palliative oxygen versus medical (room) air in relieving breathlessness in patients with refractory dyspnea: a double-blind randomized controlled trial. *Lancet*. 2010 Sep 4; 376(9743): 784-793.

The Need For Care Reports

The National Asbestos Helpline helps assess whether victims of asbestos exposure are in a position to pursue a claim for compensation. If successful, the monies received can be used to greatly improve a victim's quality of life.

Very often an asbestos condition has a significant impact upon the personal independence of the victim. Benign asbestos conditions can cause debilitating levels of breathlessness. Terminal cancers caused by asbestos bring breathlessness but also deterioration, frailty and pain.

It can be hard to quantify the impact of the conditions based only on the accounts of the victim and their family. Often the victim is unaware of all that can be done to improve their situation.

A Care Report is a document usually prepared by an experienced nurse who has had the opportunity to interview the victim in their own home.

A claimant solicitor will seek to rely on a Care Report in circumstances in which it is clear that professional opinion is required in order to accurately quantify a victim's care needs. The Care Report will assess the victim's personal independence and detail the extent to which they are reliant on others. The Report will project what the victim's future care needs are likely to be, and how best this care can be delivered. It also details the aids and equipment the victim should ideally be able to put in place to assist them in day to day living. A copy of the Care Report is provided to the victim and their care needs explained to them.



Crucially, a Care Report provides estimate costs associated with the patient's needs for care, aids and equipment. This enables the claimant solicitor to factor these costs into the claim to ensuring the victim has funds in place for the care they require.

The author of the Care Report is able to charge for the time taken to interview the victim and prepare the report. The charge will be met by the defendant in the event the claim is successful, and by the claimant solicitor should the claim be unsuccessful.

We are keen to work with nurses in Primary and Secondary care. If you are interested in Care Reports and would like more information, including how you could get involved in preparing them, please email ronan@nationalasbestos.co.uk.

ENTER OUR FREE PRIZE DRAW!

Win 10 handheld fans to give out to your patients

We are giving away 10 handheld fans to the lucky winner of our free prize draw. To enter just send an email with the subject: 'Fans for patients' to ronan@nationalasbestos.co.uk and we will enter your name into the random draw. The closing time and date for

entries is 23:59 on May 1, 2017.

The winner will be picked at random from the entries on May 2, 2017, and contacted by email. No purchase is necessary and for our prize draw terms and conditions click here: www.nationalasbestos.co.uk T&Cs.

THE NAH PRESENTS

The National Asbestos Helpline travels the country presenting to hospital units, GP surgeries and health clinics. The educational talks highlight asbestos-related diseases, symptoms, victim demographics and what can be done to help patients. If you would like us to come to you, call Ronan on 01244 684 471 or email ronan@nationalasbestos.co.uk.

New support group to launch in Cheshire West and North Wales



group in the Cheshire and North Wales area. The support group will meet every two months and each meeting will either have a specialist guest speaker or a theme such as games night!

Those attending will have an opportunity to put to experts from the National Asbestos Helpline any questions they may have, and to also share with others in the group their experiences of living with asbestos.

If you are in the Cheshire and North Wales area and have a patient who you think would benefit from attending the support group, please get in touch.

Alternatively, if you think your area could benefit from a support group, or you would like assistance with an existing support group, do not hesitate to contact us.

It is important to remember that very often those suffering from an asbestos-related disease become reclusive as they can no longer get about as easily as they could before. A lonely, sedentary lifestyle can compound existing medical problems and cause others to develop.

A well organised support group

not only allows victims to meet people in similar situations, they can also provide opportunities for discussion and advice, helping us to improve an asbestos victim's quality of life.

The National Asbestos Helpline is pleased to announce that it will be launching a new support

MAGGIE'S FOR A DAY

We rounded off our 2016 fundraising efforts by raising more than £2,400 for Maggie's Merseyside, an incredible cancer centre based in the grounds of Clatterbridge Hospital in Wirral.

Maggie's Cancer Care Centres provide free practical, emotional and social support to people with cancer, their families and friends. Built in the grounds of NHS cancer hospitals, Maggie's Centres are extraordinary places – outside the clinical environment - with professional staff on hand to offer the support people need.

The average cost to run a Maggie's Cancer Care Centre for the day is £2,400 and the National Asbestos Helpline took part in Maggie's initiative to 'Pay for a Day'. We enjoyed a static cycle ride, a murder mystery night and a sponsored cultural walk around Liverpool to raise the money.

The funding pays for Maggie's Merseyside to welcome up to 100 in one day. The Centre has a benefits advisor, cancer support specialist and clinical psychologist plus lots of wonderful volunteers who help out.



Centre Fundraising Manager for Maggie's Merseyside, Holly Smith, says: "The National Asbestos Helpline has been fantastic with their fundraising efforts throughout the year – and what a great amount they've raised! We can only keep our doors open with the generosity of our supporters, and so by helping to 'Pay for a Day' the National Asbestos Helpline has ensured continue to support people affected by cancer, and we can't thank them enough."

We have also committed to do it again this year!

If you would like to know more about Maggie's Centres go to maggiescentres.org.