

USING A HANDHELD FAN FOR SHORTNESS OF BREATH

The information given below is designed to help you manage your *stable, long term*, shortness of breath. If your breathing is getting worse or you are experiencing shortness of breath as a new feeling, it is important to seek medical advice and/or begin using your COPD Action Plan.

Will using a fan help my shortness of breath?

- A cool draft of air from a handheld fan has been found to be very helpful in reducing the feeling of shortness of breath
- You may find that the following can also help to ease your shortness of breath
 - 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 cloth on their face

How should I use the handheld fan?

- Fans with 3 or more rotating blades seem to be most effective
- When you feel short of breath, find a comfortable position. Your INSPIRED team will discuss these positions with you
- Hold your fan approximately 6 inches from your face (or simply the distance you find most helpful)
- Aim the draft of air toward the central part of your face so that you feel the draft 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 often as you wish – there are no problems associated with using it. You may find it helpful to use your fan if you stop for “a breather” while moving or walking and for sudden shortness of breath that happens when you are sitting still

Adapted from the Breathlessness Intervention Service at Addenbrooke’s Hospital NHS in Cambridge, U.K.

This resource can be accessed on-line at:

http://www.cuh.org.uk/resources/pdf/patient_information_leaflets/PIN1053_breathlessness_handheld_fans.pdf