



York and Scarborough
Teaching Hospitals
NHS Foundation Trust

Non-invasive Ventilation (NIV)

Information for patients, relatives and carers

① For more information, please speak to the ward staff.

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Introduction

This leaflet has been produced to provide information and answers about Non-Invasive Ventilation (NIV). Although it is aimed at patients it may also be useful to relatives, friends, and carers.

What is Non-Invasive Ventilation?

NIV is a method of helping you to breathe at a time when you are having difficulties. When your breathing becomes difficult it can become hard work and your chest muscles can tire easily. This can lead to a build-up of carbon dioxide and not enough oxygen getting into the blood.

How does it work?

NIV is a way of helping you breathe using a machine that is attached to a close-fitting cushioned mask that you wear over your face so that air does not leak out. The machine does not breathe for you, but gently assists each breath that you take.

What are the Benefits?

NIV supports your breathing to give your muscles a rest and allow them to recover. It does not breathe for you but gently boosts each breath that you take. It enables you to take bigger breaths by blowing in extra air when you breathe in, this can take some of the effort out of your breathing and help relieve breathlessness. It can increase oxygen levels and make you breathe out more carbon dioxide.

You will only be treated with NIV if you are both fully conscious and able to both tolerate and co-operate with treatment.

What does it feel like?

As you take a breath in you will feel a flow of air from the machine, and as you breathe out there will be a little resistance to help keep your lungs open. It is often described as breathing against a strong wind.

It can feel a bit strange or even uncomfortable to start with, however most people find that they get used to it easily. The nurses will spend some time with you to reassure you as you get used to the sensation of the mask and the air blowing on your face.

How do I know it is working?

The effects of NIV should make your breathing feel easier. To monitor your progress there are several observations that may need to be performed. One of these involves taking a small blood sample from your wrist to check your oxygen and carbon dioxide levels. A peg like device may also be placed on your finger to check your oxygen levels. Whilst receiving NIV you may be seen by a physiotherapist to teach you good sputum clearance techniques.

Are there any risks or side effects of NIV?

Most people experience little or no complications using NIV. The most common problem patients have is rubbing or soreness to their face caused by the pressure effects of the mask and straps. We can place a dressing on the bridge of your nose to help prevent break down of the skin.

Sometimes you may experience a dry mouth, but this can be overcome by having short drink breaks off the NIV. It is very important to stay hydrated whilst on NIV.

Wearing a mask can make some people feel a little claustrophobic, however with time you should overcome this. Remember the nurses and the NIV Team are here to reassure and support you during this treatment.

How long will I have to have NIV for?

To begin with you may need the NIV for most of the time but as you get better the time spent on the machine will become less and less. We follow a **five-day** weaning process; the nurse can explain this to you. The doctors and nurses will keep you informed about your progress. We will do a blood sample at the start of each day to ensure progress is made.

Usually, you will be able to have short breaks off treatment to allow you to eat and drink. Your normal treatments for your breathing condition, such as antibiotics, nebulisers and steroids will continue.

If you feel at any time that you are not able to tolerate NIV, do not worry, we are here to support you with the treatment and will do all we can to help you manage. However, you do have a right to refuse NIV if you feel you no longer wish to use it.

What happens after I have used NIV?

When you are recovered it would be helpful to discuss with your doctor, nurse and the NIV Team, whether should a similar circumstance arise, would you want to use NIV again. You may of course change your mind at that or any other point too. It is, however, helpful to have clear plans in place considering your wishes if possible.

Any other Questions?

Please feel free to ask a member of the team if you have any concerns about your treatment.

Tell us what you think of this leaflet?

We hope that you found this leaflet helpful. If you would like to tell us what you think, please contact:

The Acute NIV Team (based on Ward 34 at York Hospital) telephone 01904 726034 or email yhs-tr.AcuteNIVTeam@nhs.net.

Teaching, training and research

Our Trust is committed to teaching, training and research to support the development of health and healthcare in our community. Healthcare students may observe consultations for this purpose. You can opt out if you do not want students to observe. We may also ask you if you would like to be involved in our research.

Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

PALS offers impartial advice and assistance to patients, their relatives, friends and carers. We can listen to feedback (positive or negative), answer questions and help resolve any concerns about Trust services.

PALS can be contacted on 01904 726262, or email yhs-tr.patientexperienceteam@nhs.net

An answer phone is available out of hours.

Leaflets in alternative languages or formats

If you would like this information in a different format, including braille or easy read, or translated into a different language, please speak to a member of staff in the ward or department providing your care.

Patient Information Leaflets can be accessed via the Trust's Patient Information Leaflet website:

www.yorkhospitals.nhs.uk/your-visit/patient-information-leaflets/

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