

## Auditing the use of a fan or oxygen to relieve breathlessness in patients at Hayward House

Breathlessness is a common and distressing symptom. The use of a fan or oxygen can be effective. The need for oxygen should be thoroughly assessed, based upon oxygen saturation and titrated if necessary to allow appropriate use.  
Please follow the steps below.

Patient name \_\_\_\_\_ Age \_\_\_\_\_ Hospital number \_\_\_\_\_

Diagnosis \_\_\_\_\_

### Initial assessment

Date \_\_\_\_\_ Name of nurse completing assessment \_\_\_\_\_

1. Check breathlessness scores using scales overleaf 1a  1b
2. Check O<sub>2</sub> saturation  
After patient has been resting for 30min. If received bronchodilator wait 60min.  
Attach O<sub>2</sub> saturation meter to finger for 15min (see box overleaf).  
**If SaO<sub>2</sub> < 90% go to 3**                      **If SaO<sub>2</sub> ≥ 90% go to 9**
3. Start O<sub>2</sub> 2L/min, using nasal prongs
4. After 15 min, recheck breathlessness scores 1a  1b   
2
5. Recheck O<sub>2</sub> saturation (as above)  
**If SaO<sub>2</sub> < 90% go to 6**                      **If SaO<sub>2</sub> ≥ 90% continue O<sub>2</sub> at 2L/min**
6. Increase O<sub>2</sub> to 4L/min
7. After 15 min, recheck breathlessness scores 1a  1b   
2
8. Recheck O<sub>2</sub> saturation (as above)  
**If SaO<sub>2</sub> < 90%,**                      **If SaO<sub>2</sub> ≥ 90% continue O<sub>2</sub> at 4L/min**  
**discuss with doctor**
9. Offer use of a fan ☐  
Patient preference (tick): hand held ☐ or table top ☐
10. After 15min, recheck breathlessness scores 1a  1b   
2
11. If breathlessness relief score (2) is either 0 or 1, go to trial of oxygen (step3)  
If breathlessness relief score is 2 or more, continue the use of a fan.

## Breathlessness scores

### 1 Severity

- a** Please rate your breathlessness with the one number that best describes your breathlessness **right now**.

0    1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10

Not breathless  
at all

Breathlessness  
as bad as you can  
imagine

Please rate your breathlessness as (circle one word):

None

Mild

Moderate

Severe

- b** Please rate the amount of **trouble** or **bother** your breathlessness is causing you right now.

0    1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10

No bother  
at all

As much bother as  
you can imagine

Please rate the trouble or bother your breathlessness is causing (circle one word):

None

Mild

Moderate

Severe

### 2 Relief

How much has the therapy (oxygen or fan) helped your breathlessness?

Not eased  
at all

eased only  
a little

eased  
moderately

almost  
completely  
relieved

completely  
relieved

0

1

2

3

4

#### Using the pulse oximeter

For consistency only use the TuffSat pulse oximeter. Remove any nail varnish and apply the probe to index finger as indicated by the picture of the finger on the probe. Ensure the light of the probe is at the base of the fingernail and that there is a good signal.