

Useful links

NHS 24: Freephone 111
www.nhs24.scot

Notes

Use the space below to write down any questions you might have or to make notes.

Further information and help

For further information contact your healthcare team:

- Your medical practice.
- Your community pharmacy.
- NHS24 (web: www.nhs24.scot or tel. 111).

We are listening - how did we do?

We welcome your feedback, as it helps us evaluate the services we provide. If you would like to tell us about your experience:

- speak to a member of staff
- visit our website feedback section at: www.wihb.scot.nhs.uk or share your story at: www.careopinion.org.uk or 0800 122 31 35
- tel. 01851 708069 or 07814 071868 Monday-Friday between 9am-5.30pm.

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Based on NHS England title 'NIV: The Treatment Explained'.

Disclaimer

The content of this leaflet is intended to augment, not replace, information provided by your clinician. It is not intended nor implied to be a substitute for professional medical advice. Reading this information does not create or replace a doctor-patient relationship or consultation. If required, please contact your doctor or other health care provider to assist you to interpret any of this information, or in applying the information to your individual needs.

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Bòrd SSN nan Eilean Siar
NHS Western Isles

Non Invasive Ventilation (NIV)

The treatment explained



Patient information leaflet

What is NIV?

Non Invasive Ventilation (NIV) is a way of helping you breathe using a machine attached to a tight fitting mask that you wear over your face.

It is not the same as a nebuliser which you might have used before and delivers a medication to the lungs. It is used when you are having a severe flare-up of your breathing problem. It is also used for some severe chronic breathing problems that are not going to improve.

When is NIV used?

When the work of breathing becomes difficult, your muscles can become tired. This sometimes leads to a build-up of waste gas in your bloodstream (carbon dioxide) and not enough oxygen getting into your blood.

How will NIV help me?

NIV supports your breathing to give your muscles a rest and allow them time to recover.

It doesn't breathe for you, but gently assists each breath that you take.

This can help to get your oxygen and carbon dioxide levels back to normal.

How does NIV work?

In the past a machine to help breathing needed to be connected to a tube placed inside the windpipe of the patient. It could only be done in the intensive care unit.

To use this new type of ventilator you will need to wear a facemask, which fits firmly but not too tightly. It means that air going into your airways can't escape out of the mask. The machine increases the air pressure going into your airways as you take a breath in.



It can feel a bit strange to start with, however most people find that they get used to it fairly easily.

The physiotherapist or nurse will set the machine up and make sure that it is as comfortable for you as possible.

The nursing staff will check on you frequently so if you do find it uncomfortable they can help.

You will have your buzzer nearby to call for help at any time.

What should I expect?

As you take a breath in you will feel a flow of air from the machine, then as you breathe out there will be a little resistance to help keep your lungs open. It can feel a bit strange to start with, however most people find that they get used to it fairly easily.

The physiotherapist or nurse will set the machine up and make sure that it is as comfortable for you as possible. Staff will check on you frequently so if you do find it uncomfortable they can help. You will have your buzzer nearby to call for help at any time.

To start with, you need to wear the mask as much as possible for the first twenty four hours. It can be removed for short periods to enable you to eat and drink as normal and for your medicines and nebulisers.

To monitor your progress at the start, a peg-like probe will be placed on your finger to measure the oxygen level in the blood. A blood test will also be needed to be taken after the first hour to check that your oxygen and carbon dioxide levels are getting better.

Your normal treatments for your breathing condition, such as nebulisers, antibiotics and steroids will continue alongside using the NIV.