



TROUBLE WITH BREATHING

What is Trouble with Breathing?

Trouble with Breathing, Shortness of Breath, Breathing Problems or Dyspnea is the uncomfortable feeling of having difficulty breathing. It feels a little different for each individual, but is often described as:

- Not being able to “catch my breath”
- “Not getting enough air”
- Feeling like suffocating
- Feeling like the room is closing in
- Congestion

Breathing Problems:

- Can be caused by illness, such as lung disease, heart disease, cancer
- Can lead to other issues
 - Limitation in activity
 - Poor appetite
 - Anxiety or fear
 - Bluish discoloration to lips, nose, fingers or toes

Tell Your Care Team:

- If trouble with breathing stops the patient from doing what they want to do.
- If trouble with breathing causes the patient or their family fear, anxiety, nervousness or restlessness.
- When the patient’s skin looks bluish, especially on the face, nose, fingers, toes.
- What makes it better or worse
- If the treatment regimens are not effective

Your Care Team will work with you to discover the cause and offer treatments that can help.

How You Can Help:

- Use medications and oxygen as instructed by your Care Team.
- When the patient is having trouble with breathing, help them focus on their breathing by taking slow, deep breaths or using breathing exercises:
 - Exercise One: Breathe in through the nose for two counts, then pucker lips and exhale slowly through the mouth.



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- Exercise Two: Sit in a comfortable position with your hands resting on your stomach. Inhale slowly through the nose so you can feel the stomach muscle relax. Then, tighten the stomach muscle and exhale slowly through pursed lips.
- Ask the patient to record what makes them feel short of breath and what decreases it.
- Increase air movement in the patient's environment by using open windows or fans.
- Keep the patient and their environment cool by applying cool cloths to the face, using air conditioning, or putting a bowl of ice in front of a fan.
- Maintain a peaceful care environment; encourage relaxation techniques.
- Elevate the patient's head or have them sit in chair or recliner. Sometimes leaning forward resting elbows on a table can help.
- Talk with your Care Team about possible Integrative Therapies and emotional or spiritual support that can help.

Need more information or help? Call 633-3400 24 hours a day, 7 days a week to get live help. Thank you for letting us help care for you and your loved ones.