



Non-invasive ventilation (NIV) at home explained

Information for patients from the Respiratory Team

- **Home NIV Team**

Helpline number: 01227 866402

Open Monday to Friday, 8am to 3.30pm, excluding Bank Holidays

This leaflet provides information, care, and advice on your home non-invasive ventilation (NIV).

Please keep this leaflet with your device, as it contains useful information about your treatment. This will be very useful if you are admitted to hospital or you become unwell.

What is non-invasive ventilation (NIV)?

Non-invasive ventilation (NIV) is a treatment to help with your breathing. It involves wearing a mask connected to a device, which makes your breathing in and out easier and supports the muscles which makes your lungs work. It is generally worn at night, while you are asleep.

The mask you have been given has been selected to fit your face, and the device has been specifically set for your breathing. The details of these settings are recorded below. Please keep this information, as it will be useful to sort out any problems quickly.

You have been issued with a:

- device (with power lead)
- filter
- hose
- mask and strap
- carry bag.

To switch the device on you press and release the long on / off button on the top of the device.

To **switch the device off** you need to press and hold the log on / off button on the top of the device.

Why have I been recommended for this treatment?

- NIV can improve sleep quality, leading to increased energy and concentration levels during the day.
- It can also make you feel less breathless than before. This may mean you are able to carry out more daily tasks.
- You may feel brighter when you wake up and headache free, if this was a problem before.
- It can also reduce the likelihood of being re-admitted into hospital due to your breathing issues.

What does NIV feel like?

In order to use this type of ventilator you will need to wear a face mask which fits firmly, but not too tightly. As you breath in, you will feel a flow of air from the device to support your breathing. As you breathe out you will feel a little resistance, which is there to keep the small air passages of your lungs open. This helps to improve the oxygen levels in your blood.

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

How do I care for my device and mask?

- **Daily**
It is important to wipe round your mask every morning, with a clean damp cloth or water based cleansing wipe.
- **Every one or two weeks**
Your mask will likely need a better clean every week or two. In the morning separate the mask from all the attachments and wash it gently in warm soapy water. Rinse with clean warm water and allow to air dry before using again. **Do not dry near a source of direct heat, like a radiator.**
If you remove the headgear it is a good idea to mark a line on the straps with a permanent marker, so you know where to reattach after cleaning. The straps can be washed in warm soapy water every two weeks, and allowed to dry before you use them again.
- **Tubing**
Once a week the tubing can be washed in warm soapy water, rinsed through with clean water and hung over a door to allow water to drain out and dry.
- **Machine**
Unplug the machine from the power and wipe over with a damp cloth. Allow to dry before plugging back in and turning the power back on.

Frequently asked questions

Q Can I survive a night without my ventilator?

A This depends on why you need your ventilator in the first place. Most patients can spend one or two nights off their device. You may be more uncomfortable than usual and your symptoms of tiredness and headache

may re-appear, but this is rarely dangerous. For some patients it is not advisable to spend any nights off the ventilator, this will be discussed with you when you are set up on therapy.

Q Does my ventilator need a service?

A No, your device does not need a yearly service. We will do a visual check of the plug and adaptor, to make sure the case is still intact and there are no bare wires. If there are any issues with your device, you just need to contact us.

Q My ventilator does not feel comfortable or gives me a breath at the wrong time. Is this ok?

A If your device does not feel right, you should contact the NIV team on 01227 866402. We can make changes to make sure your therapy is comfortable.

Q Do I need to bring my NIV to hospital with me if I am admitted?

A Yes, we recommend that you bring the device, mask, and tubing with you to hospital.

Q Should I use my ventilator in the daytime?

A If you want a nap or have a chest infection, it may be a good idea to use your ventilator during the day as well as at night. You will not become dependent on it and you may gain relief from wearing it.

Q Is there anyone I can contact out of hours if there is a problem with my ventilator or breathing?

A If you are unwell you should contact your GP as usual for advice and help, 111, or emergency services if you should need to.

You can contact the NIV team helpline **01227 866402** and speak to one of our secretaries or leave a message. This is a non-urgent helpline number, and is available Monday to Friday 8am to 3.30pm (excluding Bank Holidays). If you call out of hours, you can leave a message and we will contact you within a couple of days on a working day.

If you are known to them, you can also contact the community respiratory nurse team during normal working hours. If your machine is not working outside of normal working hours you should be safe to wait until the next working day, but if you become unwell you will need to go to hospital.

Are there any risks to having NIV?

As with any treatment side effects can happen. However, the side effects linked with NIV are rarely severe and easily resolved. Common problems include the following.

- **Mask seal problems**

A small leak from the bottom of the mask is common, but will not affect the performance of your NIV. However a large leak or leak into your eyes can cause problems. You can try tightening the headgear straps slightly at home, but bear in mind this can cause further problems with soreness to your face and nose. You should contact the nurse who fitted your mask if this is a problem, and they can advise you how to manage this. It can sometimes mean a different mask: this can take a few tries to get right.

- **Soreness on the nasal bridge**

Soreness on your nasal bridge is a sign that your mask is too tight at the top or is a poor fit. Your mask will either need refitting or replacing, as the soreness can get worse over time. **Contact the NIV nurse if this happens, do not wait for your next appointment.**

- **Throat dryness**

A dry mouth is very common when using NIV, particularly with a full face mask. Usually a glass of water by your bed to sip from regularly can be enough to resolve this. In some cases humidification devices may help. You can discuss this with your NIV nurse.

- **Nasal problems**

It is common to suffer from nasal stuffiness or sneezing and a runny nose when you first start treatment. This should settle on its own. If it does not settle after a week or so, contact your GP or pharmacist to discuss whether a nasal spray may be useful.

Reason for NIV: settings

Reason for NIV	Setting	Setting	Setting	Setting
Device				
Mode				
IPAP				
EPAP				
Rate				
TI				
RT				
Mask				

This leaflet has been produced with and for patients.

If you would like this information in **another language, audio, Braille, Easy Read, or large print** please ask a member of staff. You can ask someone to contact us on your behalf.

Any complaints, comments, concerns, or compliments please speak to your doctor or nurse, or contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) on 01227 783145 (tel://+441227783145), or email ekh-tr.pals@nhs.net (ekh-tr.pals@nhs.net)

Patients should not bring large sums of money or valuables into hospital. Please note that East Kent Hospitals accepts no responsibility for the loss or damage to personal property, unless the property has been handed into Trust staff for safe-keeping.

Further patient leaflets are available via the East Kent Hospitals website (<https://www.ekhuft.nhs.uk/information-for-patients/patient-information/>).

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