

Patient information

Non- Invasive Ventilation-NIV

Critical Care Department

What is it?

CPAP means 'Continuous Positive Airways Pressure'

BiPAP means 'Bi-level Positive Airways Pressure'

NIV means 'Non-invasive ventilation'.

All of the above are known collectively as non-invasive ventilation methods.

When patients cannot breathe adequately, these methods are used to provide additional support in terms of breathing and oxygen delivery.

In some patients, non-invasive ventilation can help reduce the likelihood of a patient requiring a breathing tube and a breathing machine.

In most patients, they reduce the difficulty in breathing by providing some amount of rest to the breathing muscles.

How is non-invasive ventilation delivered?

- Non-invasive ventilation can be delivered with various machines.
- All of the machines provide additional support for breathing using either a tight-fitting face mask, a mask over the nose or a helmet.
- For the treatment to work, it is vital that the patient cooperates by keeping these devices properly in place.
- Non-invasive ventilation is usually given to fully conscious patients so that their breathing efforts are not reduced by sedative medications.

How long do patients stay on non-invasive ventilation?

As patients improve, their dependency on these devices reduces (they need less pressure and less oxygen).

As soon as patients can breathe without them, we are able to take them off. This may be a stepwise progress taking a couple of days or longer.

Some patients may worsen despite non-invasive ventilation and we may have to place them on the ventilator.

What are the risks?

- These masks are uncomfortable and patients sometimes feel claustrophobic because of them.
- Patients may feel hot underneath due to humidification.
- Some patients may also develop pressure sores on their noses if the masks have to stay on for long periods.



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Following your discharge from hospital or attendance at your Outpatient appointment you will receive a text asking if you would recommend our service to others. Please take the time to text back, you will not be charged for the text and can opt out at any point. Your co-operation is greatly appreciated.

Further information

For further information please contact below

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