

## Help with your breathing

**There may be a time when you will need help to breathe. Depending on the cause of your shortness of breath, there are options that can help you breathe easier. These choices include:**

- Relaxation techniques
- Medicine
- A mask and bilevel positive air pressure (BiPAP) machine that gently pushes air into your lungs
- A breathing machine (ventilator)

### **What relaxation techniques can help you breathe easier?**

Some techniques are praying, listening to music, meditating, taking slow and deep breaths, breathing in through your nose and out through your mouth, resting, and relaxing your body.

### **What treatments and medicines are available?**

- Oxygen given through a soft tube that is placed into your nose
- Inhalers and nebulizers that you breathe into your lungs
- Other medications depending on the reason for your breathing problems

### **What is BiPAP?**

BiPAP gently pushes air into your lungs to help you breathe by a mask or soft prongs that go into your nose, which are connected to a machine. It may be uncomfortable and hard to talk and eat while you are using the BiPAP. BiPAP may still be an option, even if you do not want to be put on a breathing machine.

### **What is a breathing machine or a life support machine (ventilator)?**

A breathing machine helps you breathe when you are not able to do so yourself. A tube will be put into your mouth and down into your windpipe (trachea). The tube is connected to the machine, which pushes oxygen into your lungs and to the rest of your body. You will not be able to eat or talk. Often, you will get medications to help you stay calm and comfortable. Before going on a breathing machine, you should understand whether this is expected for a short time period or permanently.

### **What if you do not want breathing support?**

You will still get care to treat your symptoms and ease pain or discomfort. Your goals and choices will guide the kind of care you receive.

The more your healthcare team knows about your goals and wishes, the easier it is for them to take care of you the way you would like to be treated. Your healthcare wishes can be put in a document called an advance directive (Health Care Power of Attorney and/or Living Will). Completing an advance directive will ensure that your wishes are known and honored. We ask each patient to choose a healthcare Champion — someone you trust to speak for you if you ever are unable to make your own healthcare decisions. It is important to have conversations with your healthcare Champion so that he or she will be able to speak for you. We also encourage you to talk with your healthcare team and those who are important to you, so they understand your wishes.

For more information on advance care planning, contact us at **844-677-5134** or **[ChoicesandChampions@NovantHealth.org](mailto:ChoicesandChampions@NovantHealth.org)**.

You can also visit our website at **[NovantHealth.org/ChoicesandChampions](https://NovantHealth.org/ChoicesandChampions)**.