

## Contact details

**Lister Hospital** (main switchboard) 01438 314333  
Coreys Mill Lane,  
Stevenage,  
Hertfordshire, SG1 4AB

**Critical Care Central** 01438 285488  
Main tower block, Level 4

**Critical Care North** 01438 284332  
Main tower block, Level 4

**Critical Care South** 01438 285651  
Main tower block, Level 4

## Further Information

If you have any questions or require any further information, please ask one of the Critical Care team (doctors/nurses/ physiotherapists). We will be happy to explain anything!

[www.enherts-tr.nhs.uk](http://www.enherts-tr.nhs.uk)

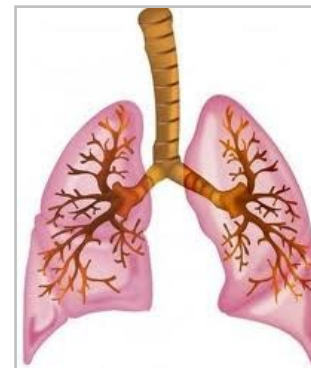
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# Information for Relatives

## Non-Invasive Ventilation

### Critical Care Unit



Non-invasive ventilation (NIV) is commenced for our patients that are having breathing problems.

When our patients find normal breathing difficult and increasingly hard work, the chest muscles become tired and patients will become fatigued.

This can lead to erratic patterns in breathing and a subsequent reduction in oxygen levels and/or a build up of the waste product, carbon dioxide. Carbon dioxide has to be excreted to prevent further deterioration in lung function and the patient's general condition.

NIV supports our patient's breathing, offering a pressure support in the lungs to help the chest muscles rest and to give the patient time to recover.

NIV is often referred to as a 'tight mask'. This is because the mask fits snugly onto the patient's face in order to get a tight seal and allow the machine to deliver the oxygen. This is sometimes a little uncomfortable for the patient and we do make sure that the mask is adjusted as often as necessary to provide comfort and ensure that our patients are tolerating the treatment well. Your support in this, by encouraging your relative to keep the mask on, is often invaluable as both CPAP and BiPAP can be quite noisy.



CPAP



BiPAP

The machine doesn't breathe for our patients, it supports each breath taken. This in turn expands the lungs and works towards an eventual return to normal breathing.

### **Making our patients comfortable**

Patients receiving this therapy will have a named nurse caring for him/her continuously, monitoring all aspects of the treatment and his/her progress.

When receiving NIV, our patients can find it hard to talk against the pressure of the air being given through the mask and also due to the tight fit of the mask. Mostly patients are advised to keep the mask on for as long as possible, however, regular breaks from the treatment can be taken. This allows our patients to have a drink, to eat, receive mouth care, take medications and generally have a small break from wearing the mask, dependant on the patient's condition. Time will be spent on refitting and adjusting the mask until it is comfortable again before treatment resumes. A nurse call bell will be given to the patient to call for assistance if needed at any time, should their nurse be helping with another patient.

Regular blood tests, continuous monitoring of observations and assessment of the patient's general condition will be taken to determine if the NIV is helping to improve our patient's breathing. These also help to assess if he/she can take longer breaks from the mask, which is a sign of improving lung function. Patients receiving NIV will have regular visits from our respiratory physiotherapist. Our critical care doctors will discuss treatments and the plan of care with the physiotherapist and the named nurse.