

# Help with breathlessness clinic

**This factsheet is for guidance only and has been produced with assistance from healthcare professionals**

## **What is the help with breathlessness clinic?**

Breathlessness is the feeling of being out of breath. With serious illnesses, breathlessness can occur after much less physical exertion than normally expected; even crossing a room slowly can be a struggle.

The help with breathlessness clinic offers patients one to one appointments with members of the team which comprises a Doctor in Palliative Care, a Specialist Occupational Therapist and a Specialist Physiotherapist. The aim of the clinic is to provide advice and support to patients and their families.

## **Is this clinic suitable for me?**

If you are struggling to cope with your breathlessness despite regular inhalers or other treatment for your underlying illness, then this clinic may be helpful for you.

The aim of any treatment or intervention is to help you feel more in control of your breathlessness, rather than it controlling you.

## **What treatment will the doctor offer?**

The doctor will offer you a full assessment, weighing up your current treatment and discussing other potential interventions. They will offer you the opportunity to share your most troubling worries and concerns.

## **What will the physiotherapist offer?**

The physiotherapist will look at your breathing pattern and show you techniques to help you calm your breathing. Positions and aids that reduce the work of breathing may also be discussed. The potential benefit of a hand held fan will be explored. If clearing your chest is difficult, they will teach you techniques to make this more effective.

## **What will the Occupational Therapist offer?**

The occupational therapist will help you find new strategies to cope with your breathlessness. These may include advice regarding equipment that can help you save energy and help make daily activities feel less of a struggle. Referrals to appropriate agencies such as wheelchair services and social services may be included.

## **When and where does the clinic take place?**

Sessions generally last between 40–60 minutes and take place in the LOROS outpatient clinic. Hospice volunteer drivers can often provide transport, if getting to LOROS is difficult for you.

## **Can I bring a relative or carer?**

Yes, patients often find it helpful to bring along someone. They can help you to share all of your concerns and be given advice in how best to support you, when your breathlessness is most troublesome.

## **How does the clinic differ from pulmonary rehabilitation programmes?**

The help with breathlessness clinic is tailored to individual patients rather than a regular group session. The focus is giving you increased confidence and strategies to manage your breathlessness. You will not be expected to participate in an exercise programme.

## **When and where does the clinic take place?**

The clinic currently runs every Tuesday afternoon. If it is not possible for you to attend, we can contact you via telephone for advice and if necessary refer you to the community therapist.

## **How long do I attend for?**

This depends on you. Many patients find it helpful to seek continuing support as and when needed and therefore we do not routinely discharge patients.

## How can I be referred to the help with breathlessness clinic?

Any healthcare professional can refer you if you have distressing breathlessness. This could be the Respiratory team at Glenfield Hospital; the Oncology team at the Leicester Royal Infirmary; a hospital clinical nurse specialist; a nurse specialist that visits you at home; your community matron, or your GP.

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This leaflet is updated regularly. For the most up to date information please visit [loros.co.uk/care](http://loros.co.uk/care)



### In cases of comments or complaints, please contact:

Chief Executive or Director of Care Services  
LOROS, Groby Road, Leicester. LE3 9QE

or, Care Quality Commission, East Midlands Office, Citygate, Gallowgate, Newcastle Upon Tyne.  
NE1 4PA

### Alternative language copies available:

If you would like this information in another language or format, please contact the Patient Experience Lead PA on (0116) 231 8435

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