



Strength
at Your Side

Shortness of Breath (Trouble Breathing) Training Sheet

WHAT IS SHORTNESS OF BREATH?

It's an uncomfortable feeling of having difficulty breathing and can also be described as not getting enough air. A person may not look like they are having trouble breathing but may say they feel short of breath or not able to catch their breath.

WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS OF SHORTNESS OF BREATH?

- A restless or anxious feeling
- Fast breathing
- A feeling as though you are not getting enough air
- A feeling as though you can't catch your breath
- May feel like the room is closing in
- Coughing
- Wheezing
- Unable to take a deep breath
- It's a personal experience for each individual

WHAT SHOULD YOU REPORT TO THE UNITY TEAM?

- Any of the above symptoms
- Any new or increased trouble breathing
- If your breathing stops you from doing what you want to do

WHAT CAN HELP RELIEVE SHORTNESS OF BREATH?

There is much you, your caregiver, and the Unity team can do to help manage trouble breathing. The Unity team will always try to find the cause and discuss treatment options with you and your doctor.

Things you can do:

- Medications: Many different types of medicines can help improve trouble breathing such as narcotics, steroids or inhalers.
- Oxygen: Not everyone will benefit from oxygen. The Unity nurse will assess your breathing and discuss the need for oxygen with your doctor. Use oxygen only as directed by the Unity team.
- Sit in a chair or recliner if able.
- Elevate your head on pillows when lying in bed.
- Increase air movement by opening a window, using a fan or air conditioner.
- Apply a cool cloth to your head or neck.
- Conserve energy. Take time to rest between activities.
- Avoid strong perfumes or scented hand sanitizer or lotions.
- Eliminate allergens like smoke, dust and mold.
- Keep your environment quiet to decrease feelings of anxiety.
- Engage in relaxing activities such as prayer, meditation, calming music and massage.
- Focus on your breathing. Take slow, deep breaths or use breathing exercises that the Unity team has taught you.
- Breathing through your mouth may cause dryness. Try ice chips or a cold, moist washcloth to relieve dry mouth.

Contact Unity anytime you have questions or concerns about shortness of breath.

Call Unity 24/7 at **920.338.1111** or **800.990.9249**

If there is no answer and the phone continues to ring, call **920-490-7418**.