

Keeping well in summer

Please find information from the Lung Health Service about how to maintain your health during the warm summer months.

Some useful tips to prevent sickness

- Take all your medications as prescribed.
- If the air is smoky or dusty, shut the windows and turn on any fans/air conditioners in the home. Only go outside if necessary during this time.
- Use an extractor fan in the bathroom when showering to allow ventilation (or if it's not smoky or dusty outside, open a window)
- If you have a shower chair/stool/Wheelie Walker, please always use these.
- Slow down when walking.
- Do not rush when doing any activities – we encourage you to take your time and have frequent rests and use pursed lip breathing.
- Break activities into smaller parts or sections and take frequent rests when doing activities.
- Do not continue with any activities if you cannot speak in sentences –stop for a rest before you get too breathless.
- Try to avoid panic when breathless - sit in a supported position and use pursed lip breathing until you have fully recovered.

If you are feeling short of breath

- Take it slowly or stop the activity and rest when you need to, preferably in a sitting position.
- Get into a good breathing position; lean on arms or hands.
- Use pursed lip breathing
- Use calming self-talk. Think “relax” as you sigh and breathe out. Tell yourself that your breathing is settling down and it usually will.
- Use your reliever medication with spacer (e.g. Ventolin). Remember 1 puff, 4 breath technique
- Use controlled breathing – in through your nose and ‘sigh’ out longer breaths
- Relax your body – let the tension go out of your muscles and hands.
- If you feel hot, put your fan on so it blows on your face, wipe your face and neck with a cool wet cloth, have a cool drink.
- Use distractions – music, stories, tapes, TV, look at photos and pictures.
- Have a family member or friend reassure and encourage you.

Signs that you should go and see your GP

- You are more breathless doing your normal activities.
- It takes longer to recover from your breathlessness.
- You are coughing more than usual.
- You are producing sputum, which is thicker, darker in colour and in greater amounts.
- You generally feel more tired.
- You have lost your appetite.
- You have a fever.
- You are hot and sweaty.

If you have any questions, please contact your Lung Health Nurse on 07 3413 5770 or 0410 589 224 from 7.30am to 4.00pm weekdays.