



Supporting someone  
with breathlessness



## Managing Infections

Stopping infections from happening can be hard. Infections and flare-ups will happen and some patients get them more easily than others. However, there are some things that can help.

Above all, it is important not to let fear of infection stop you both from keeping active and living a fulfilling life. Keeping fit and active are especially important in getting better after infections – the fitter the patient is, the quicker they can recover. See the handout for '**Keeping active**' to learn more about how to do this.

### Have you tried...?

#### How to manage an infection

- The patient may have a tailored self-management plan – if they don't, then ask your GP, practice nurse or specialist nurse about one
- Follow the self-management plan, taking emergency/rescue medication if needed
- If the patient has used their emergency/rescue medication, then they should let their GP know
- Seek help if you are concerned or if you have tried everything else – call NHS 111 out of hours, or 999, if you need to
- Keep useful telephone numbers to hand e.g. GP, specialist nurse If the patient uses an inhaler, ensure they have had their annual inhaler check/review



## What you can do to help the patient

- Encourage the patient to **attend a rehabilitation course** – this is one of the best things you can do. Ask your healthcare team for more information about groups that may be available locally to you
- Make sure you and the patient **have your annual flu vaccinations and one-off anti-pneumococcal vaccination**
- You should both remember to **wash your hands with hot water and soap, or use hand gel**. Also try not to touch your eyes and nose
- **Eat a healthy diet** with plenty of fresh fruit and vegetables, and drink warm drinks in winter months
- **Keep active** – take regular exercise. [Click here to find out more about how to do this](#)
- Remember it's ok to **say no to visitors who may have a cough, cold or fever**
- **Try not to breathe in smoke**