




## Non-Drug Management for Common Symptoms at the End of Life

Use of non-drug symptom management strategies can help relieve symptoms and reduce reliance on medications. Generally non-drug approaches to symptom management are preferred, particularly for mild to moderate symptoms.

Symptom	Non-drug measures
<b>Agitation* or Restlessness</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Repositioning</li> <li>• Calm surrounding environment, quiet room, dim lights</li> <li>• Reassurance</li> </ul>
<b>Anxiety</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explore fears and concerns</li> <li>• Provide reassurance</li> <li>• Address spiritual or religious needs</li> <li>• Distraction – e.g. playing music or radio, watching TV</li> <li>• Relaxation techniques e.g. visualisation, deep breathing, mindfulness</li> </ul>
<b>Breathlessness (at rest or minimal exertion)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Positions that can help with breathlessness</li> </ul> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; align-items: center;">    </div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Breathing techniques (e.g. breathing round a rectangle, focus on “out” breath)</li> <li>• Reduce room temperature / Open window</li> <li>• Cooling the face by using a flannel or cloth</li> <li>• Reassurance</li> <li>• Relaxation techniques</li> <li>• <b>Avoid portable fans</b> due to infection control risk in COVID-19</li> </ul>
<b>Confusion*</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Re-orientate (explain where they are, who they are etc) and reassure</li> <li>• Ensure lighting levels mimic the time of day</li> <li>• Ensure the patient has access to glasses and hearing aid if applicable</li> <li>• If family members can be present involve them in reassuring the patient</li> </ul>
<b>Cough</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Suck on menthol sweets(e.g. fisherman’s friends) or other hard sweets</li> <li>• Honey and lemon in warm water</li> <li>• Humidify room air</li> <li>• Increase oral fluids</li> <li>• Elevate the head when sleeping</li> </ul>
<b>Dry Mouth</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gently brush teeth with fluoride containing toothpaste</li> <li>• Sip fluids</li> <li>• Suck ice chips</li> <li>• Apply dry mouth gel (e.g. BioXtra / Oralieve / Biotente oral balance gel) to lips tongue and gums every 2 hours as needed.</li> </ul>
<b>Fever</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduce room temperature</li> <li>• Wear loose clothing</li> <li>• Cooling the face by using a cool flannel or cloth</li> <li>• Oral fluids</li> <li>• <b>Avoid portable fans</b> as infection control risk in COVID-19</li> </ul>
<b>Nausea and Vomiting</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sea Bands applied to wrists</li> <li>• Ginger tea</li> <li>• Good mouth care – see above</li> <li>• Ice chips</li> <li>• Distraction e.g playing music or radio, watching TV</li> </ul>
<b>Pain</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Heat or cold applied to painful area (e.g. wheat bags, Deep Heat or Deep Freeze cream)</li> <li>• Gentle massage</li> <li>• Distraction e.g playing music or radio, watching TV</li> <li>• Relaxation methods and techniques e.g visualisation, deep breathing</li> </ul>

\*Also need to consider reversible causes of these symptoms