

Cough Assist Technique for Airway Clearance

Information for patients, parents and carers

What is a Cough Assist?



The Cough Assist is a machine which can help you clear secretions or 'phlegm' from your lungs. The aim of the treatment is to help you breathe in and out deeply and quickly. This can help when your own cough is not strong enough.

The Cough Assist is usually given by a mask over your mouth and nose. The machine delivers a supported breath to make sure your breath in is deep enough. After this, the machine helps you breathe out quickly and you would feel a gentle 'sucking' sensation.

What is it used for?

There are many different reasons why Cough Assist may be needed including:

- Muscle problems that make breathing and coughing difficult
- Bone problems that make the chest small, less flexible and coughing difficult.

If you are unsure about the reason why you have been given the machine please ask your physiotherapist.

What do I need to do before I use it?

- The cough assist machine must be plugged in when in use
- To turn the machine on, press the switch on the front of the machine.

Safety check

- **Check** the machine settings **each time** before starting treatment
- In auto mode **check** the pressure readings on the dial. To do this block the mouthpiece with one hand, then watch as the pressure gage moves from **INHALE -check pressure**, then to **EXHALE -check pressure**. You are checking that the pressure reading is the same as you have been told by your physiotherapist.
- **Check** that the filter, tubing and mask are attached to the cough assist and that there are no holes/splits.

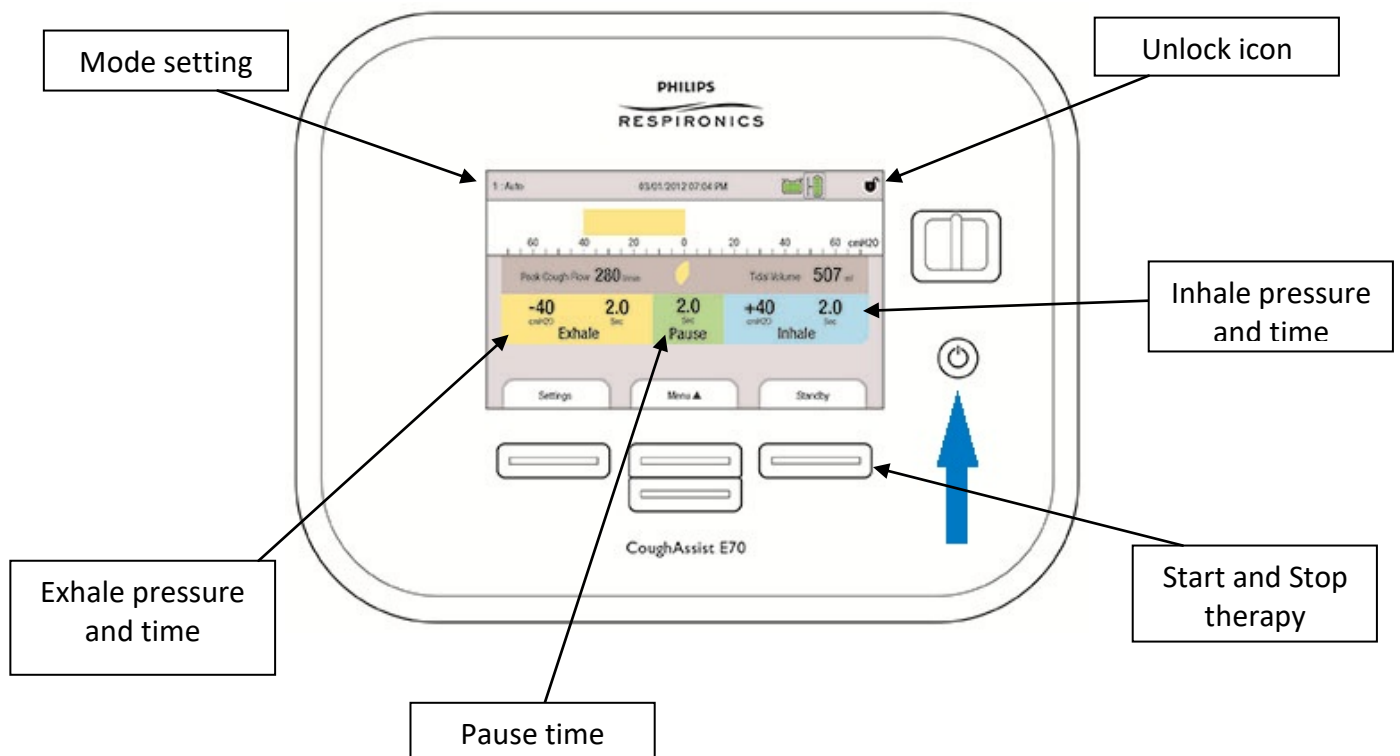
Are there any risks?

It is vital to check the pressures before starting to make sure your settings are correct.

If you become unwell contact your GP or your physiotherapist or visit accident and emergency if you feel you are seriously unwell.

Circuit set up

See picture below. The circuit consists of a round filter attached to the patient port, a length of wide tubing, a short plastic connector then the mask.



Important points to remember

- It is important your cough assist is placed on a firm flat surface (e.g. a table). It should be kept clean and dust free
- Switch the device off after use
- New tubing and mask will be supplied by your physiotherapist.

Physiotherapy plan

Every day:

When unwell:

Contact information

If you have any concerns, contact:

Physiotherapy Department,
Royal Hospital for Children and Young People
Edinburgh

Tel.: **0131 312 1079**

Royal Hospital for Children and Young People
50 Little France Crescent
Edinburgh
EH16 4TJ
Tel. 0131 312 1079

