

Stop Cough Exercise

Information for patients, parents and carers

What is the Stop Cough Exercise?

The Stop Cough Exercise is a breathing technique designed to overcome the desire to cough by calming down an oversensitive cough reflex. It is for a persistent cough where assessment has ruled out other causes.

What causes the persistent cough?

A dry, tickly cough is a type of irritation caused by several things such as cold, dry or fast moving air hitting the throat. You can think of the cough reflex like a 'cough button' in the throat; it has become so sensitive that just the air moving during breathing can press the button. Once you have coughed you will normally feel the need to take a deep breath and cough again. You are effectively "feeding" the cough as each big breath further irritates the lungs and throat.

The Stop Cough Exercise

The best advice is **don't cough**. At first it will be difficult to make yourself stop coughing. The anti-coughing exercise overleaf helps calm an over sensitive cough reflex. It works by reducing the airflow and keeps the air around the throat warm and moist. It is often possible to stop a cough at an early stage.

To gain most benefit the exercise should be practised to stop a 'pretend' cough several times a day.

If you have a productive cough and are coughing up anything other than small amounts of clear mucus, you will need to arrange to see your GP as you may have a chest infection or another condition.

Contact number

This exercise should be taught to you after a clinical assessment to rule out other causes for a cough. If you have any further questions, please contact your named physiotherapist or the Physiotherapy Department, Royal Hospital for Children and Young People on **0131 312 1079**

Royal Hospital for Children and Young People

50 Little France Crescent

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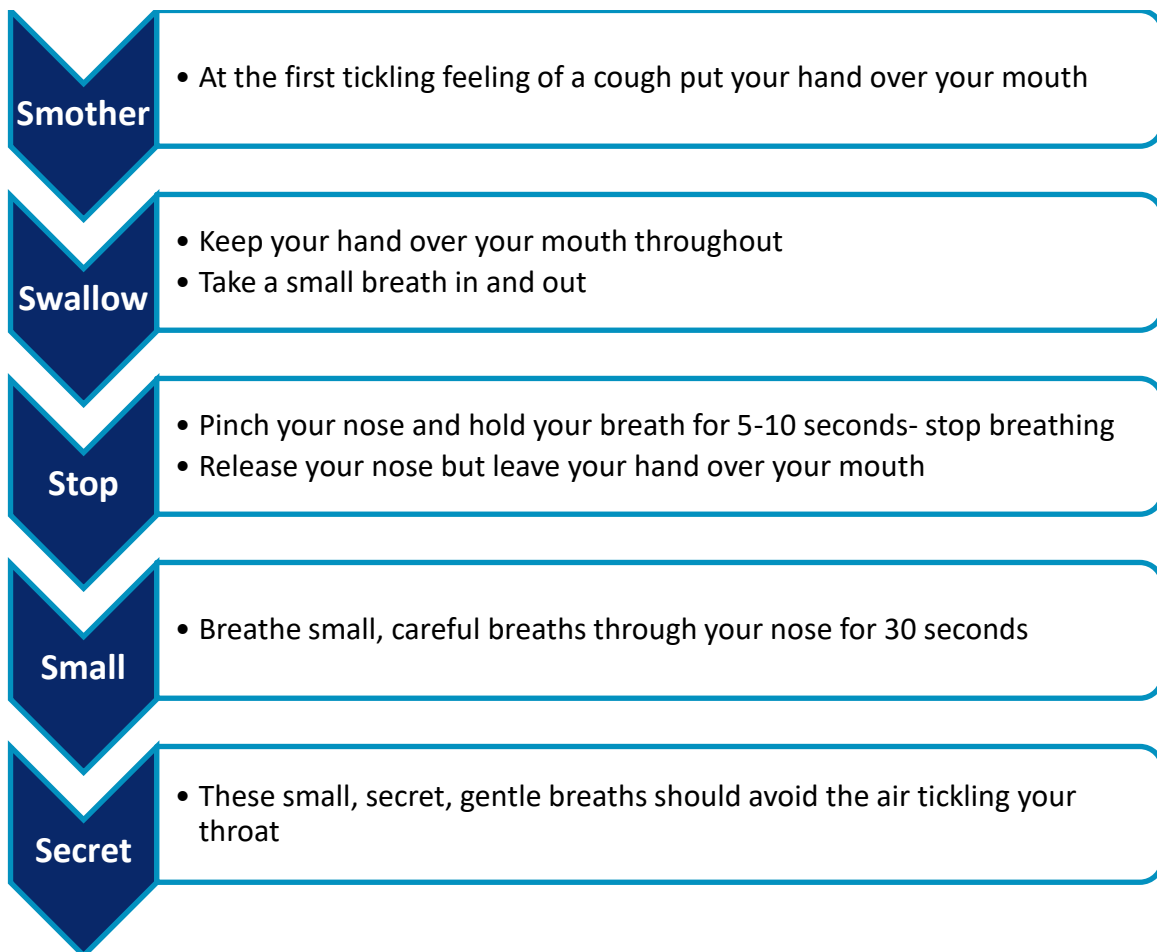
Tel. 0131 312 1079

Acknowledgements

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The Stop Cough Technique: (The 5 S's)

Practice this technique at least 5 times a day for a week when you first start this exercise



- All the time resist the urge to cough.
- Take a slow, steady breath in and out of the nose.
- Repeat the process twice more, or until the 'tickle' has subsided.

The 5 S's: Smother, Swallow, Stop, Small, and Secret is a good way to remember the stop cough sequence.

