

Deep breathing exercises following surgery

Information for patients, parents, and carers

What do they do?

The aim of breathing exercises/games is to promote deep breaths and fill the lungs with air. The extra air can also get into your airways behind secretions and help to move them.

There are a number of different breathing exercises/games available. The physiotherapist will advise which ones may suit you best, or you can experiment and see what is most comfortable.

It is really important that you are **sitting in a good position** to do these activities so that the air can get right to the bottom of your lungs. So **always** make sure you are sitting up (either in bed or a chair) as much as you can before starting these exercises.

Active Cycle of Breathing (ACBT): uses a combination of breathing, huffs, and coughs.

- Start with about 30 seconds of relaxed breathing, where your upper chest should remain relaxed with most of the movement occurring in the lower chest.
- Take a slow deep breath in, at the end of the breath in you should hold the breath for a few seconds, then relax as you breathe out. Repeat this 3-5 times.
- This should be followed by a medium breath, with a forced breath out (huff), as if you are trying to steam up a mirror.
- Finally, you should try as big a cough as you can.



Supported Cough:

Deep breathing or a cough may be slightly uncomfortable following your surgery. If it is uncomfortable, you may find it helpful to use a rolled up towel, pillow, or your teddy over your tummy with your arms resting on top, giving yourself a small squeeze to support you while you take deep breaths or a cough.

Triflow: can be used to encourage deep breaths after your operation.

- Hold the Triflow in an upright position and place your lips tightly around the mouthpiece.
- Slowly take a deep breath in and see how many of the balls lift up. Try to keep them up for around 3-5 seconds.
- Repeat this 5 times, with a small break between each breath.
- Try to complete 3 sets of 5 breaths. Ideally this should be carried out every hour whilst you are awake.



Bubble PEP: a fun way to help clear secretions after your surgery.

- Fill the plastic bottle (provided by the physiotherapy team) with fresh water up to the double line (around 10cm) and place the bottle in a cardboard bowl, as it can get messy.
- Place one end of the plastic tubing into the water in the bottle.
- Place the other end of the tubing in your mouth.
- Breath in through your nose and breath out through the plastic tubing, causing bubbles in the water.
- Repeat this 5-10 times, then have a rest and repeat.



Blowing Bubbles: Nice and simple and lots of fun. Using a pot of bubbles, you can:



- See how many bubbles you can blow with one breath.
- See how big of a bubble you can blow by using a slow controlled breath.
- Make it more of an active game by blowing bubbles to your family or friends and then they can try and blow the bubble back towards you.

Cotton wool huffs: Using cotton wool balls and some tubing

- Place the cotton wool ball in the end of the tubing and huff hard to fire it out.
- Can you make a target and see if you can get the bull's-eye?
- Play with a family member or friend to see who scores the highest score.



If you would like information on any of these activities, please speak to your physiotherapist.

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