NHS
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NHS Foundation Trust

A Guide to Airway Clearance Techniques in Toddlers

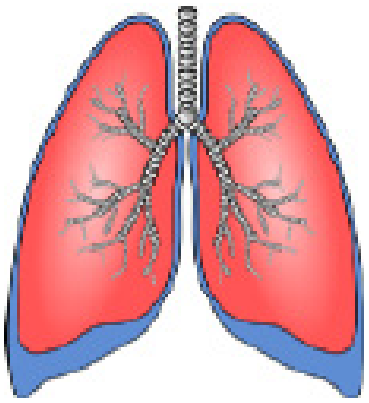




Background

- Clearing excess mucous or “secretions” is important, at any age, to ensure out lung function is as good as possible.
- Secretions can act as a barrier to gas exchange and can reduce the amount of oxygen being transferred into the blood.

- Sometimes it can sometimes be difficult for children to clear their secretions. Especially with a diagnosed respiratory/neuromuscular condition or even a chest infection.
- This leaflet is designed to give some ideas for parents to use to aid secretion clearance.





compassionate care

Percussion



Technique used to “loosen” secretions, making them easier to clear. It can be used in-conjunction with postural drainage.
Use a cupped hand over a towel/piece of clothing and firmly “pat” across your child’s chest. This may be shown to you by your Physiotherapist.

Vibrations and Shaking



Can also be used in conjunction with Postural Drainage.

This involves creating high-oscillation vibrations with your hands as the child breaths out. This can also help to loosen and move secretions and may cause coughing (this is normal). This is also something that will be demonstrated by your Physiotherapist.

Again it may be difficult for a toddler to tolerate this for long periods of time. Getting into a routine and incorporating play into treatment is really important.

Active Cycle of Breathing Technique ACBT)

ACBT is a series of breathing exercises to aid expansion of the lungs and aid secretion clearance.

Breathing Control

Prompt to take deep breaths, using their diaphragm or “tummy muscles” to breathe.

Thoracic Expansion

Also known as deep breathing exercises. Emphasis on a slow, deep breath in and holding in for 2-3 seconds. This will help to open up airways, improving gas exchange and making secretions easier to clear.

Forced Expiratory Technique (FET)

Also known as a “huff”. This is a fast, sharp breath out, as if you are trying to steam up a mirror. This will help to move secretions up the windpipe to make easier to clear. This can then be followed by a cough.

The cycle can be repeated 2-3 times depending on the amount of secretions being cleared.

Game Ideas

Breathing games are good to get your child involved in their Physiotherapy.

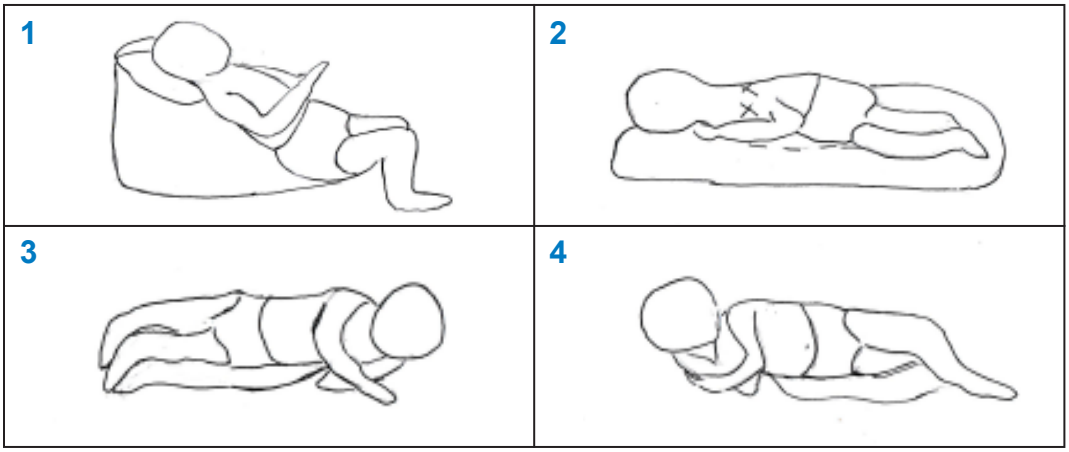
- **Bubble PEP**– a great game to encourage deep breathing and secretion clearance. Please ask your Physiotherapist for information on setting this up.
- **Blow games** – Games that encourage your child to blow out can be a really good way to encourage breathing exercises through play, e.g. blow football, bubble blowing, blow races
- **Other blow activities** – encouraging things like blowing dandelions, party blowers or even instruments such a recorder/flute
- **Exercising** – Exercise and exertion is a really good way of encouraging deep breathing in a fun way.

Again these ideas may be used by your Physiotherapist, please ask them for more information on breathing exercises specifically for your child.

Positioning and Postural Drainage

Regular position changes are important to ensure secretions are kept loose in your lungs to make them easier to clear.

Here are some common positions that will be recommended by your Physiotherapist:



Positioning uses gravity to help move secretions away from the outer part of the lungs towards the middle. It can be difficult to keep a toddler in this position for any amount of time– it is important to keep them distracted such as playing in one position, or even changing position when sleeping.

Your Physio will guide you in terms of times in different positions more specific to your child.

For more information regarding secretion clearance, please speak to your child's Physiotherapist.
For more information on Cystic Fibrosis, visit the Cystic Fibrosis Organisation website.
This leaflet has been designed as a reminder for common techniques recommended by Physiotherapists, please do not use this as a guide to treat your child without first receiving Physiotherapy advice.

All information used in this leaflet was gained from the Cystic Fibrosis Trust (2017)- Physiotherapy Airway Clearance techniques. This can be accessed via the CF trust website: www.cysticfibrosis.org.uk

If you have any comments about this leaflet or the service you have received you can contact :

Physiotherapy
Acute Inpatient therapy
Calderdale Royal Hospital
Telephone No: 01422 222680
www.cht.nhs.uk

If you would like this information in another format or language contact the above.

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