

Clearing your lungs

This handout explains when to clear your lungs, when to do it more often, and step-by-step instructions for breathing techniques. It also covers the clapping technique and offers tips to make it more fun for young children.

Clear your lungs every day

- At least once a day
- 3 or 4 times a day, if you have a lot of secretions

When to do it more often

- Feel tired all the time
- Short of breath a lot
- Have a lot of mucus
- Mucus is dark

Chest breathing or deep breathing

1. Relax upper chest
2. Use hand to apply a little pressure to lower rib cage
3. Slowly breathe in so lower lungs fill with air
4. Remove hand and breathe out

Huffing or forced air breathing

1. Take a medium breath
2. Keep mouth open
3. Pull in stomach muscles
4. Breathe out in one long huff
 - You will cough if you have a lot of secretions
 - If you cough more than twice, do controlled breathing to stop coughing

Draining secretions (postural drainage)

- You may need someone to help you
- Chest clapping
 - Remove rings and jewelry from hands
 - Cup hands with fingers together
 - Clap the chest to loosen secretions
 - Clap over clothes or a towel, not bare skin
 - Clapping should not hurt
- You may need to sit or lie in different positions
- Ask your doctor or therapist to show you how
- You can find pictures and more information at www.cftrust.org.uk

Make it fun for kids

- Blow bubbles
 - Steam up a mirror
 - Children 3 to 5 years old can help clear their lungs
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The content in this letter is intended as general information and may not apply to you or your condition. Talk to your doctor about how to best use this information and how to take care of your medical condition. This information is not intended to provide or replace professional medical advice or services.
