

Patient information

The Use of an Incentive Spirometer

Haematology Department

This leaflet explains what an Incentive spirometer is, how and when to use it.

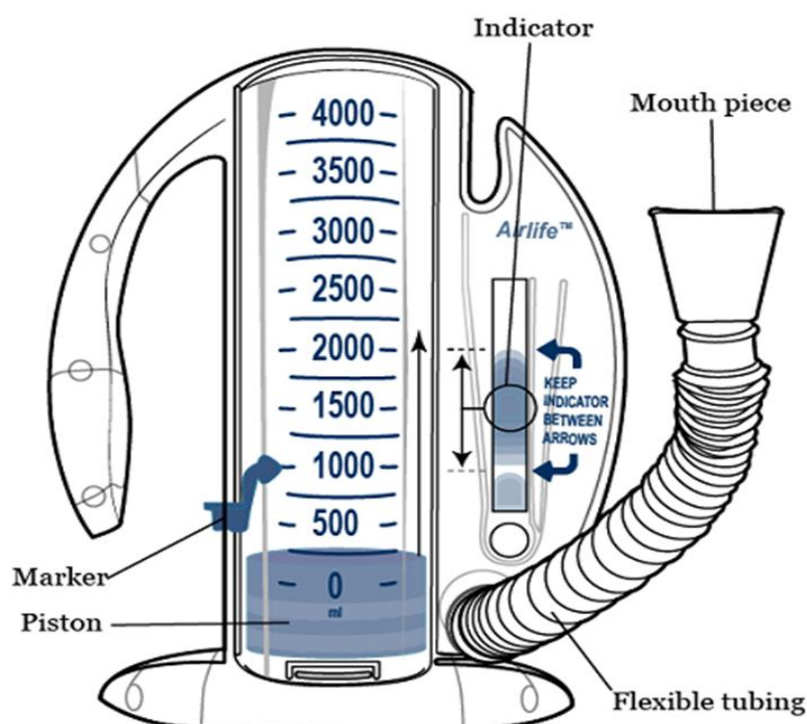
What is an Incentive spirometer? An Incentive spirometer is a medical device that is used to help deep breathing. It is designed to help you take deep breaths to expand your lungs fully. Deep breathing opens the air sacs in the lungs and helps to reduce the chance of developing an infection or acute chest syndrome.

Why is it important to use an Incentive spirometer?

Sickle cell crisis pain and pain medicines such as morphine, can cause shallow breathing. Shallow breathing can put you at risk of developing a chest infection or a chest crisis (acute chest syndrome) because you are not expanding your lungs fully. Using an Incentive spirometer has been shown to reduce this risk.

When should I use an Incentive spirometer?

We suggest you use an incentive spirometer when crisis pain begins, particularly if the pain is in your chest, back or shoulders. However, any severe pain can cause your breathing to become shallower. Sometimes we may also suggest you use the incentive spirometer before and after you have had an operation or if you are having a baby.



How do I use an Incentive spirometer?

Start by sitting upright and hold the incentive spirometer upright

1. Practice slow deep breathing, three-four long slow in breaths and out breaths before using the spirometer
2. Place the mouthpiece of the incentive spirometer into your mouth. Make sure you make a good seal with your lips
3. Breathe out (exhale) fully, really trying to empty your lungs.
4. Breathe in (inhale) slowly and deeply. Really try to expand your lungs. The piston in the incentive spirometer will rise as you take a breath in.

You should try to keep the indicator between the arrows during your breath.

5. Your breath should last for three - five seconds, exhale through the nose with the mouthpiece removed.
6. Repeat this routine for five - ten breaths– pause between every three - four breaths to prevent light headedness
7. You should use the Incentive spirometer every two hours when you are awake.

Can I use an Incentive spirometer at home?

Yes, once you have been given an incentive spirometer please use it when you have crisis pain at home and bring it with you if you are being admitted or reviewed in hospital.

How do I look after my Incentive spirometer?

Ensure it is washed regularly (weekly) in hot soapy water

Feedback

Your feedback is important to us and helps us influence care in the future.

Following your discharge from hospital or attendance at your outpatient appointment you will receive a text asking if you would recommend our service to others. Please take the time to text back, you will not be charged for the text and can opt out at any point. Your co-operation is greatly appreciated.

Further Information

Specialist Haemoglobinopathy Team:

Consultant Haematologist
Advanced Clinical Practitioner
Clinical Nurse Specialist x2
Haematology Specialist Registrar (Rotational Position)
Psychologist

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