

## Patient information

### Postural Drainage

Therapies Department – Aintree Hospital

This is an information leaflet for patients who suffer with a lot of mucous on their chest. It aims to provide information relating to different drainage positions which will assist in the clearance of sputum.

Your physiotherapist will talk you through the contents of this leaflet and answer any questions you may have.

#### What is Postural Drainage?

Postural drainage is an airway clearance technique. It uses gravity to facilitate the removal of mucous from the lower areas of the lungs.

Postural Drainage is commonly used in conjunction with other treatments such as;

- Active Cycle of Breathing Technique (ACBT).
- Chest percussions.

There is a separate leaflet available on ACBT which your physiotherapist can provide you with.

Your physiotherapist can explain the role and use of chest percussion if this is appropriate to you.

#### When to do postural drainage?

- You should carry out postural drainage at an appropriate time for you.
- You should aim to carry out the treatment for a minimum of ten minutes. **Make sure you leave enough time.**
- Use your bronchodilator/ reliever inhaler before starting your postural drainage position.

This tends to be your blue/ green inhaler but ask your pharmacist or a medical professional if you are unsure.

- It is better to take any steroid inhaler after completing your postural drainage, ask your pharmacist or any medical professional if you are unsure which is your steroid/ preventer inhaler.

### **When not to do Postural Drainage?**

- If you have eaten in the last hour or feel nauseous.
- If you are suffering with reflux.
- If you are much more breathless than normal.
- If you have hurt your ribs / spine or chest muscles.
- If you have chest tightness.
- If you are coughing up blood in mucous.

### **Do not carry out head down positions if you have any of the following –**

- High blood pressure.
- End stage pregnancy.
- Nose bleeds.
- Recent surgery.
- Heart failure.
- Severe breathlessness.

If you are unsure if you should be doing these exercises please check with your physiotherapist.

**Common postural drainage positions include –**

- 1. Forward Lean (helps to drain the upper regions of your lungs).**



- 2. Sitting upright (helps to drain the top parts of your lungs).**



- 3. Right / Left side lying (helps to drain the upper lung).**



- 4. Right / Left side lying with pillows underneath your hips (to drain the deeper regions of your lungs).**



- 5. Lying on your front (helps to drain the lower deep parts of the lungs).**



- 6. Lying on your back (helps to drain the front of your lungs).**



## **Chest Clearance**

Once you have adopted the position shown by your physiotherapist, spend at least 10 minutes in this position and use breathing exercise such as the ACBT to help to clear the mucus.

## **Individual advice**

Your physiotherapist will instruct you of which positions you need to complete independently at home and inform you how long you need to adopt each position for.

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## **Your physiotherapist is**

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## **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**

**If you have any further questions or concerns that this leaflet has not been able to answer please contact your ward physiotherapist or telephone below:**

**Aintree Hospital  
Therapies Department**

**Monday-Friday 9am-4pm. This is likely to be an answer phone but we will return your call.**

**Other sources of information**

- **British Lung Foundation 0300 0030555**  
**www.lunguk.org**

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All Trust approved information is available on request in alternative formats, including other languages, easy read, large print, audio, Braille, moon and electronically.

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