

How To Cope With Breathlessness

Easy Breathing

This method helps to reduce your shortness of breath by allowing you to control your own breathing:

1. Sit upright with your head and neck supported on pillows and hands resting in your lap
2. Put one hand on your stomach.
3. Breathe slowly and gently, trying not to use your shoulders or upper chest. The hand on your stomach should move up and down.

Positions of Relaxation

The following positions will help to control and relax your breathing when you are short of breath. You can use the easy breathing described above in any of these positions:

High side lying

- Use about 5 pillows to raise your upper chest.
- This is a good position if you become breathless at night.



Forward lean position

- Sit at a table, with your head and upper chest supported on several pillows.



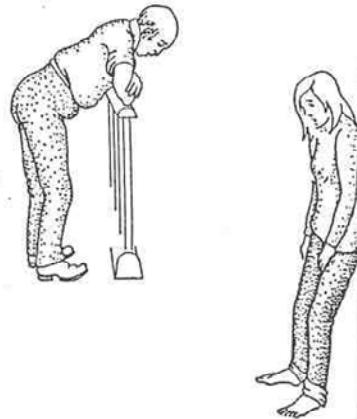
Relaxed sitting

- Keep your back straight.
- Rest your forearms on your thighs.



Forward lean standing

- Lean forward with forearms resting on an object of suitable height e.g. a windowsill

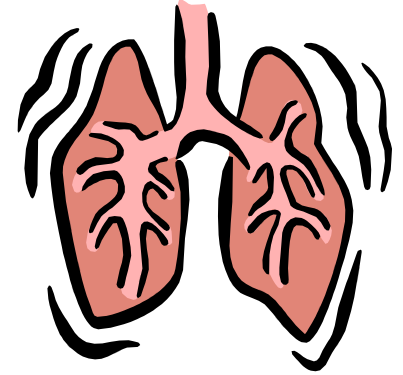


Relaxed standing

- Lean back against a wall with your feet slightly apart and away from the wall.
- Relax your shoulders and arms

The easy breathing described above can be carried out in the above 2 positions if you are unable to sit down.

This Pathway outlines a calendar of events detailing the care and treatment you may expect before, during and after your hospitalisation for pneumonia. You will be given this pathway along with more detailed education if required. You will be asked to sign that you have received and understood the information. You will also have the opportunity to ask questions about your care and be involved in planning if you have individual requirements.



PLEASE TAKE SOME TIME TO GO THROUGH THIS PATHWAY AND ASK QUESTIONS ABOUT ANYTHING YOU DO NOT UNDERSTAND.

What is Pneumonia?

Pneumonia is an infection of the lungs. It often follows a bad cold or flu-like illness, which lowers the normal defence mechanisms.





The most common symptoms are:





- fever
- feeling short of breath
- a cough
- low energy levels
- * Recovery from pneumonia depends not only on the type of pneumonia, but also on the general health of the person before becoming ill.
- * The elderly and those who are already seriously ill are at risk of a slower recovery.
- * When recovering from pneumonia, it is important to consult with your doctor if:
 - you are not improving in the first few days or
 - your symptoms worsen
- * It is also important to keep your follow-up appointment with your doctor.

VACCINATION:

- * You should discuss immunisation against influenza and pneumococcal pneumonia with your doctor.
- * All people over the age of 65 should receive the vaccine, as should anyone with a serious illness, such as diabetes or heart disease.

Disclaimer: This Patient Pathway is intended as a guide only. Each patient is an individual and responses may vary. If you have any questions, please talk with your doctor or nurse.

	EMERGENCY CARE	DAY OF ADMISSION
Treatment and Observations 	<p>You will have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> blood tests a drip in a vein to give fluids and medications chest X-ray a doctor examine you your blood pressure, pulse, temperature and breathing measured blood sugar level tested your urine tested. <p>You may have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ECG (heart tracing) 	<p>Your:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> pulse, blood pressure, breathing rate, oxygen levels and temperature will be measured regularly. <p>You will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> have a drip, in a vein, to give fluids and medications.
Medication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> You will be given antibiotics through the small tube in your vein. You may be given pain relief if needed. Your current medications will be re-viewed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Antibiotics will be given through the drip.
Nutrition 	<p>You may:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> have lost your appetite feel nauseated require a drip if you have been unable to drink enough fluid. 	<p>You will be :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> given regular small meals/snacks encouraged to drink often. <p>Please let staff know if you require a special diet eg. diabetic, heart disease etc.</p>
Respiratory 	<p>Staff will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> measure the oxygen in your blood regularly by attaching a light probe on your finger or ear if necessary, give you receive oxygen through a mask. 	<p>Staff will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> measure the oxygen in your blood regularly give you oxygen if necessary take a sample of your mucus monitor your cough. <p>You will be seen by the physiotherapist.</p> <p>You will be encouraged to deep breathe and cough every hour.</p>
Discharge and Education	<p>The nurse will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> explain your condition to you and your family inform you / your family about possible length of stay in hospital explain about the Hospital in the Home program, if necessary. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Your treatment plan will be discussed with you / your family. You / your family will be Informed about possible 3-4 day stay in hospital.

DAY 1	DAY 2 ONWARDS	DISCHARGE DAY
<p>Your:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> doctor will visit you each day and discuss your progress. <p>You will have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a blood test chest X-ray (if not done prior) your temperature, pulse and blood pressure checked every 4 hours. 	<p>You will have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> your temperature, pulse and blood pressure checked regularly. 	<p>You will be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> given a follow-up appointment to see your Doctor. It is important that you keep this appointment to ensure you continue to improve. 
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Your current medications will be reviewed by the pharmacist. 	<p>You will be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Switched to antibiotic tablets when your medical condition begins to improve. <p>The Pharmacist will review medications for you to take home on discharge and discuss any new medication with you.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Pharmacist will supply medications for you to take home. Be sure to take the full course of antibiotics whether you feel better or not. Immunisation will be discussed and a brochure given to explain the flu vaccination.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If you require a special diet, the Dietitian may see you. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> You will be encouraged to drink fluids regularly. You will be given regular small meals. 	<p>You will be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> able to drink normally and eat small amounts of food
<p>The physiotherapist will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> see you to check your chest and encourage deep breathing exercises check your cough and encourage coughing up mucus encourage walking to exercise your lungs. <p>The nurse will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> measure the oxygen in your blood regularly give you oxygen if necessary. <p>You will be encouraged to deep breathe and cough hourly.</p>	<p>The physiotherapist will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> monitor your breathing exercises daily discuss the Pulmonary Rehabilitation Program, if applicable continue with your breathing exercises. <p>You will be encouraged to deep breathe and cough hourly.</p> 	<p>You will be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> given a sheet of home exercises that the physiotherapist will go through with you. Please continue to do these exercises at home until you have fully recovered. <p>Gradually increase your activity as your health improves but remember to take regular rests.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Your treatment plan will be discussed with you / your family. Any concerns you / your family may have should be discussed with your nurse. A nurse will assess you for Post Acute Care – services you may need after discharge. The Occupational Therapy Department can provide a range of aids if you are experiencing difficulties with daily activities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An outpatient appointment will be made with your local Doctor. The physiotherapist will give you an exercise sheet for discharge. 	