Post operative breathing exercises
Information for patients

Introduction
This leaflet explains the things you can do after your operation to help reduce the effects of the anaesthetic, control sickness and help prevent a chest infection.

It is important that you get up and move around as soon as possible after your operation. You should be walking short distances around the ward within a few days.

Your pain should be controlled enough to allow you to take deep breaths, cough and start moving around. If this is not the case, tell your nurse, physiotherapist or a member of the medical staff.

Breathing exercises
Do the following deep breathing exercises while lying, or sitting as upright as possible in bed or in a chair:
1. Relax your shoulders and upper chest
2. Take a deep breath in (through your nose, if possible) to fill the bottom of your lungs
3. Hold this breath for three seconds
4. Sigh out slowly through your mouth.

Take three of these deep breaths then rest - more than this may make you dizzy or light-headed. Practice your breathing exercises every hour. You can start as soon as you come round after your operation.

Coughing
It is important that you can cough so that you can clear any phlegm. When you need to cough, it will be more comfortable to:
1. Bend your knees up if lying, or lean forwards if sitting
2. Support your wound firmly with your hands, pillow or rolled up towel and cough strongly to clear any phlegm.
Mobility

An upright position is better for your chest than lying flat.

Whilst in bed, try to move your arms and legs and change your position regularly.

Getting up and around is very important, and you should be sitting out of bed and walking as soon as possible.

If you have any questions, please ask your physiotherapist.

This leaflet is available at the following locations:

Cheltenham General Hospital
Tel: 0300 422 3040

Cirencester Hospital
Tel: 01285 884 583

Gloucestershire Royal Hospital
Tel: 0300 422 8535

Moore Cottage Hospital
Bourton-on-the-Water
Tel: 01451 823 723

Moreton District Hospital
Tel: 01608 812 618

St. Paul’s Medical Centre
Tel: 01242 215 037

Tewkesbury Hospital
Tel: 01684 853 933

Winchcombe Hospital
Tel: 01242 605 203