

**Patient  
Information**

# Breathing exercises after your operation

## Introduction

This leaflet tells you about 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 you find you cannot do these things, tell your nurse, therapist or other member of the ward 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, which should make your tummy move outwards. Hold this breath for 3 to 5 seconds
3. Sigh out slowly through your mouth.

Take 3 of these deep breaths then rest - more than this may make you dizzy or light-headed. Practice your breathing exercises at least every hour when you are awake. You can start as soon as you wake up 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 for you to:

1. Bend your knees up if lying, or lean forwards if sitting
2. Support your wound firmly with your hands, a pillow or rolled up towel and cough strongly to clear any phlegm.

Reference No.

**GHPI0334\_12\_16**

Department

Therapy

Review due

**December 2019**

**Patient  
Information**

## **Mobility**

Resting in 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 moving around is very important, you should be sitting out of bed and walking as soon as possible.

If you have any questions regarding either your breathing or mobility, please ask to speak to a ward therapist.

**Content reviewed: December 2016**