Coughing and Deep Breathing Exercises

Purpose
TO CLEAR THE LUNGS, BRONCHI, AND TRACHEA OF SECRETIONS AND VENTILATION.

TO LOOSEN SECRETIONS AND PROMOTE MORE EFFECTIVE COUGHING (DEEP BREATHING).

APPLIES TO
- Registered Nurses
- Licensed Practical/Vocational Nurses
- Therapists
- Other (Identify): ________________________

Equipment/Supplies
- ONE TO FOUR PILLOWS, DEPENDING ON THE CLIENT’S COMFORT AND POSTURE.
- COMFORTABLE SURFACE THAT CAN BE SLANTED (HOSPITAL BED, TILT TABLE, OR CHAIR).
- GLASS OF WATER.
- TISSUES AND PAPER BAG.
- EMESIS BASIN.

Procedure
1. WASH HANDS. REFER TO THE HAND WASHING PROCEDURE.
2. PERFORM RESPIRATORY ASSESSMENT TO DETERMINE AREAS OF CONGESTION.
3. COMPLETE POSTURAL DRAINAGE AND/OR MANUAL PERCUSSION AND VIBRATION AS ORDERED BY THE PHYSICIAN. (SEE POSTURAL DRAINAGE PROCEDURE, AND MANUAL PERCUSSION AND VIBRATION PROCEDURE).
4. POSITION THE CLIENT IN A HIGH-FOWLER’S POSITION, SITTING ON SIDE OF BED, OR WITH HEAD OF BED ELEVATED, AS
APPROPRIATE. POSITION PILLOWS FOR SUPPORT AND COMFORT.

5. INSTRUCT THE CLIENT TO TAKE SLOW, DEEP BREATHS AND PUSH ABDOMEN OUT UPON INSPIRATION. PLACE HANDS ON CLIENT'S CHEST WALL TO HELP HIM TO DIRECT AIR TO THE LOWER AND PERIPHERAL AREAS OF THE LUNGS. THIS MAXIMIZES AIR DISTRIBUTION.

6. INSTRUCT THE CLIENT TO INHALE DEEPLY THROUGH THE MOUTH OR NOSE, THEN TO EXHALE THROUGH THE MOUTH IN THREE SHORT HUFFS OR COUGHS. AN EFFECTIVE COUGH SOUNDS DEEP AND ALMOST HOLLOW. AN INEFFECTIVE COUGH SOUNDS SHALLOW AND HIGH PITCHED.

7. HAVE THE CLIENT EXPECTORATE ANY SPUTUM INTO TISSUES OR EMESIS BASIN. IF THE CLIENT IS UNABLE TO EXPECTORATE, SUCTIONING MAY BE REQUIRED.

8. REPEAT COUGHING SEQUENCE (STEPS 5 THROUGH 7) ADDITIONAL TWO OR THREE TIMES.


10. INSTRUCT THE CLIENT TO INHALE SLOWLY AND DEEPLY, PUSHING ABDOMEN OUT.

11. INSTRUCT THE CLIENT TO EXHALE THROUGH PURSED LIPS AND TO CONTRACT ABDOMEN.

12. BEGIN DOING THE BREATHING EXERCISES CONSISTENTLY FOR ONE MINUTE AT A TIME AND REST FOR TWO MINUTES. INCREASE PERIODS OF EXERCISE TO TEN MINUTES, FOUR TIMES EACH DAY.

13. REASSESS RESPIRATORY STATUS.

14. WASH HANDS. REFER TO THE HAND WASHING PROCEDURE.

**Documentation Guidelines**

1. DOCUMENT IN THE CLINICAL RECORD:
   
   A. DATE, TIME, AND PROCEDURE PERFORMED.
   
   B. THE CLIENT’S ABILITY TO PERFORM PROCEDURE.
   
   C. SPUTUM CHARACTERISTICS.
   
   D. THE CLIENT’S TOLERANCE OF PROCEDURE.
E. RESPIRATORY STATUS AT BEGINNING AND END OF PROCEDURE.

F. INSTRUCTION OR TEACHING DONE.

RELATED PROCEDURES