

# Preventing Breathing Problems After Surgery Education Plan

## Resources for Staff

- Policy J-02

## Teaching Tools

- Prevention of Postoperative Pulmonary Complications Education Plan
- Incentive Spirometer Instructions

## References:

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## Approved by:

- Patient Education Council

## Authored by:

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For questions concerning this education plan, or if you encounter problems using the links, email [patienteducation@bronsonhg.org](mailto:patienteducation@bronsonhg.org).

\* This page is intended for staff use only. Do not give to the patient. This document is not a part of the permanent medical record.

## **Are there any contraindications to this teaching?**

Some surgeries will prohibit use of cough and deep breathing, please see policy J-01 for contraindications.

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## **Preventing Breathing Problems After Surgery Education Plan**

### **Getting Ready to Learn About Preventing Breathing Problems after Surgery**

Learning something new can be hard. It is even harder if you are not feeling well. The purpose of this education plan is for you and the staff to review this information together. Here are some good things to tell the staff:

- Who you want to learn with you. We would like to have someone who will be helping you at home learn with you.
- The best way for you to learn. Do you learn best by reading a book or pamphlet, or by doing things yourself?
- If you are not feeling well, if you are in pain or you cannot focus on learning right now.

This information is important to my health. We may explain something more than once. We will be giving you information in small bits over several days.

### **What I Need to Learn About Preventing Breathing Problems After Surgery**

By the time I leave the hospital I will be able to show or tell the staff how to:

1. Use the incentive spirometer
2. Take deep breaths and cough
3. Get out of bed and move about as soon as possible
4. Control my pain

### **The staff will use three questions to teach me about preventing breathing problems after surgery:**

1. What is my main problem?
2. What do I need to do?
3. Why is this important to me?

The staff will ask me to repeat back important points in my own words, or ask me to show what I have learned. They want to make sure that I know about preventing breathing problems after surgery.

### **What is my main problem?**

- Risk for breathing problems
  - Because of my surgery, I have a greater chance of developing breathing problems.

### **What do I need to do?**

Steps I can take to prevent breathing problems

- How to use and incentive spirometer
  1. Use incentive spirometer every two hours while I am awake.
  2. Breathe out (exhale) normally.
  3. Place the mouthpiece in my mouth. Seal my lips around the mouthpiece.
  4. Breathe in (inhale) slowly and deeply through my mouth with my lips closed tightly on the mouth piece. I may need to hold my nose closed. Continue breathing in until I reach my goal. My goal is set by my nurse and myself.
  5. After I inhale as deeply as I can, hold my breath for at least 3 seconds.
  6. Remove the mouthpiece from my mouth and breathe out normally.
  7. Repeat this technique as instructed, usually 10 to 15 times over 10-15 minutes. **Take my time.** Take a few normal breaths between deep breaths.
  8. Record how deep a breath you can take
- Take deep breaths and cough
  1. I should take a good deep breath in and then cough deeply 2-3 times every two hours.
  2. If I have pain while coughing, I may hold a pillow or rolled-up blanket against my surgery site, and apply pressure as I cough.
  3. Use the incentive spirometer to check how deep I am able to take in a breath.
- Get out of bed and move about as soon as possible
  1. Changing my position helps me to be able to breathe deeper and prevent breathing problems.

2. My level of activity will be ordered by my doctor.
3. I need to be as active as soon as possible after surgery. I may be assisted to walk as soon as 4 hours after surgery.
4. I need to call for assistance to get out of bed.

Control my pain

1. I will tell my nurse if I am in pain. I need to control my pain in order to breathe deeply.
2. I will ask for pain medicine before my level of pain gets too bad.

**Why is this important to me?**

Importance

- Using the incentive spirometer measures how well I am breathing deeply and coughing.
- Having surgery and being in pain might make me have problems breathing deeply. I could get pneumonia and this could keep me from healing quickly
- Doing the deep breathing and coughing and moving to a chair will help to keep me from getting pneumonia
- Pain can make it difficult to cough
- Pain medicine and being less active might make me breathe less deeply

As part of my care and to help me understand how to prevent breathing problems after surgery, I may receive:

- Incentive Spirometer Instructions
- Preventing of Breathing Problems after Surgery Education Plan