

I have received and understand the instructions in this handout.

Patient's Name:

Signature

Healthcare Provider's Name:

Signature

If your problem continues, fails to improve, or becomes worse, we recommend that you be examined by your family physician, the referred physician, or go to the nearest emergency room immediately. Please follow up with a physician as directed.

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Documents received: 1) How to Use an Incentive Spirometer, by EBSCO Medical Review Board

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How to Use an Incentive Spirometer

An incentive spirometer helps expand your lungs as far as they can when you take a deep breath. It is mainly used by people after surgery. It helps improve how the lungs work and lowers the risk of pneumonia because more air gets into more spaces in your lungs.

What You Will Need

Incentive spirometer—This device has a tube to breathe into. An indicator shows how much air you inhaled into



your lungs.

Steps to Take

Step 1

Sit up as straight as possible.

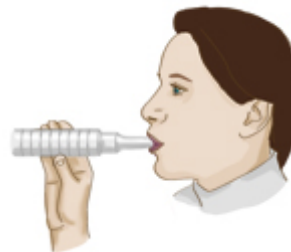
Step 2

Hold the spirometer in an upright position.

Step 3

Breathe out normally.

Step 4



Place your lips around the mouthpiece in a way that seals it off from the outside air.

Step 5

Breathe in slowly and as deeply as you can. You need to breathe slowly. There will be a separate chamber with a ball inside. It tells you if you are breathing too fast or too slow.

Step 6

Try to get the ball in the main chamber to rise as high as you can. Your care team will give you a target to reach.

Step 7

Hold your breath for at least 5 seconds. Keeping your lungs filled as much as you can helps keep the lungs from getting stiff.

Step 8



Move the spirometer away from your lips, exhale, and rest a few breaths.

Step 9

Repeat the above procedure as many times as you can up to 10 times.

Step 10

When you have finished, take a deep breath and cough many times. This clears the lungs of mucus and secretions. If it hurts to cough, press a pillow or blanket on the painful portion of your chest or belly while you cough.

Common Questions

Q. How often do I have to use the incentive spirometer?

A. Use the device until you are breathing more normally all of the time. Situations vary, but many doctors advise using the spirometer once (a cycle of 10 breaths) hourly for the first few days after surgery.

Q. I get lightheaded when I use the spirometer without resting a little between deep breaths. Why is this?

A. You are breathing too deep and too fast. Pace yourself and breathe normally for a few breaths between using the spirometer.

Call Your Doctor

Call your doctor if you have:

- A lot of pain
- A sudden decrease in the ability to do these exercises
- Trouble breathing

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