

ICOUGH Prescriptive Nursing & Patient Expectations

I – INCENTIVE SPIROMETER EXERCISES

- Why: “Helps to keep your lungs healthy”
- Every patient is to receive an incentive spirometer.
- Teach patient correct use of spirometer, including return demonstration.
- Encourage Incentive Spirometer Exercises 10x per hour while awake until discharge
- Keep incentive spirometer within reach of patient at all times

C – COUGH AND BREATHE DEEPLY

- Why: “Helps to clear your lungs”
- Cough and deep breath every 2 hours
- Encourage use of splint pillow as needed

O – ORAL CARE

- Why: “Keeps your mouth free from germs”
- Brush your teeth and rinse with mouthwash at least 2x per day, at 8AM and 8PM.

U – UNDERSTAND ICOUGH PRACTICES

- On admission to the unit, give each patient a brochure and educate about importance of following all of the ICOUGH elements
 - important for patient and family to take an active part in recovery so that the patient will get better and not have any problems
 - Importance of pain management
 - Reinforce education PRN

G – GET OUT OF BED AND WALK THE HALLWAY

- Why: “Helps to prevent problems and recover faster. Helps to keep lungs clear and improve circulation.”
- Start early ambulation with physician order as soon as it is safe.
- Walk in hallway at least 3x per day (To the bathroom does not count)
- Sit in chair for every meal
- If not able to eat, assist to sit in chair at least once in the morning, afternoon, & evening
- Use white board to track walks in the hall
- Document distance in the medical record

H – HEAD OF BED ELEVATION

- Why: “Helps your breathing”
- Keep head of bed elevated >30 degrees at all times

Nursing Expectations:

- Plan of care rounds: Report any patient challenges with ICOUGH protocol.
- Change of shift report: Report out on the ICOUGH bundle items, especially focus on any areas of challenge. Report on your ambulation plan for the day and what may be important for the next shift.
- Nursing Documentation: Make sure you document on every element of the ICOUGH bundle

General Information:

- Remind your patients to do the ICOUGH bundle items. For example: “Mr. Smith, how are you doing with your ICOUGH today”?
- Assist your patients with filling out the checklist on the brochure and make sure that you agree with what they are documenting.

How to Use an Incentive Spirometer

Using the incentive spirometer, also called a breathing exerciser, helps you take deep breaths to open the air sacs in your lungs. This can help reduce the chance of developing breathing problems like pneumonia.

Use the incentive spirometer on your own as instructed to help your recovery.



Steps for use

1. If possible, sit up straight. It may help to sit on the edge of a chair or your bed.
2. Hold the incentive spirometer upright.
3. Breathe out, then close your lips tightly around the mouthpiece and take in a slow deep breath through your mouth.
4. As you take a deep breath, the piston in the clear chamber of the incentive spirometer will rise. It is important to breathe in slowly to allow the air sacs in your lungs time to open.
5. After you breathe in as deeply as you can, hold your breath for 3 to 5 seconds.

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6. Take out the mouthpiece and breathe out slowly. Relax and breathe normally for a few seconds until the piston returns to the bottom of the chamber.

7. **Repeat these steps for a total of 10 times every 1 hour** or as directed by your doctor. If you start to feel lightheaded or dizzy, slow down your breathing and give yourself more time between deep breaths

8. After you do the 10 deep breathing exercises, it is very important to **take a deep breath and cough** to clear the mucus from your lungs.

Helpful hints

- Take medicine to control your pain. It is harder to take a deep breath if you are having pain.
- Keep the incentive spirometer within reach, so you remember to use it as directed.
- Use your incentive spirometer when you go home to help keep your lungs clear while you recover.