

Information for patients and carers

Incentive spirometer

An information guide

A decorative graphic at the bottom of the page consisting of three overlapping, wavy bands of blue color, transitioning from a lighter blue at the top to a darker blue at the bottom.

What is an Incentive Spirometer?

An incentive spirometer is a device designed to help you take a deep breath. It encourages the filling and opening of air sacs in your lungs and improves the way your breathing muscles work which aids secretion clearance. It is a simple device we use following certain surgeries to help reduce the risk of respiratory complications such as chest infections.

How does the incentive spirometer work?

The incentive spirometer provides visual feedback on how deep a breath you are taking as well as the quality of the breath. As you breathe in the yellow ball rises. This will support you to take in a large, controlled breath, aiming to keep the ball at the smiley face for as long as possible.

This large, controlled breath allows air to get into all parts of your lungs and helps prevent or reverse small pockets of lung collapsing.



How to use your incentive spirometer

1. Sit upright in a comfortable position.
2. Connect the tubing to the base of the device.
3. Take a breath out.
4. Place the mouthpiece in your mouth and create a good seal with your lips.
5. Breathe in slowly through the mouthpiece. As you breathe in, you should feel your tummy rise and your rib cage move out and upwards. Aim to get the yellow ball to the smiley face.
6. Try and keep the ball elevated for 3 seconds.
7. Slowly breathe out.
8. Repeat up to a maximum of 10 times.
9. Note the number that the white disc reaches. This is then your target level to aim to improve on for future use. The yellow adjustable indicator on the side can be used to help you remember your target.

How often should you use the incentive spirometer?

When practicing at home you should aim to use your incentive spirometer 4 times a day, each with a maximum of 10 breaths. If you feel lightheaded during the session, then stop and reduce the number of breaths you carry out at one time. Your physiotherapist will be available to discuss any issues or concerns.

How to clean your incentive spirometer

To clean your incentive spirometer, wash it in warm soapy water every day. Do not place it in the dishwasher, boil it or bleach it. Also, to avoid the risk of infection please do not allow family or friends to use your device.

Your hospital stay

Please bring your device into hospital when you are admitted for your surgery. It is useful to leave it on your table where it will remind you to do your breathing exercises on a regular basis. This is when it will be of the most use to you. In the early days post-operatively, please ask the ward staff to assist with cleaning your device. When you are more mobile you will be able to do this yourself.

In the early days following your surgery it would be advisable to do your breathing exercises every hour, again for a maximum of 10 repetitions. If pain makes it difficult then please ensure you ask your nurse for adequate pain relief.

Once your volume (white disc) has returned to the level it was prior to your operation, please dispose of the device.

If you have any questions, then the physiotherapist on the ward will be happy to help.

Contact details

Should you require further advice or information please contact: Physiotherapy department, surgical team on **01772 523399** or the Prehabilitation team on **07925348585**.

Sources of further information

If you would like a demonstration in using your incentive spirometer and you have access to YouTube, then search 'incentive spirometer icough' and you will see a video put together by Central Manchester University Hospitals.

www.lancsteachinghospitals.nhs.uk

www.nhs.uk

www.accessable.co.uk

www.patient.co.uk

Follow us on social media @lancshospitals

Lancashire Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust is not responsible for the content of external internet sites.

All our patient information leaflets are available on our website for patients to access and download:

www.lancsteachinghospitals.nhs.uk/patient-information-leaflets

Lancashire Teaching Hospitals is a smoke-free site. Smoking is not permitted anywhere on any of our premises, either inside or outside the buildings. Our staff will ask you about your smoking status when you come to hospital and will offer you support and advice about stopping smoking this will include Nicotine Replacement Therapy to help manage your symptoms of withdrawal and the opportunity to speak to a nurse or advisor from the specialist Tobacco and Alcohol Care Team.

If you want to stop smoking, you can also contact Smokefree Lancashire on Freephone **08081962638**

**Please ask a member of staff if you would like help in understanding this information.
This information can be made available in large print, audio, Braille and in other languages.**

Department: Core Therapies
Division: Diagnostic and Clinical Support
Production date: November 2023
Review date: November 2026
JR 1080 v1