

Take part in your recovery

Do deep breathing, coughing, exercising in bed, and walking to prevent pneumonia and blood clots

You play an important part in your recovery. This sheet includes instructions on how to prevent pneumonia and blood clots by breathing deeply, coughing, exercising while in bed, and walking safely after your surgery.

Deep breathing after surgery

1. Raise head of bed as far as allowed or sit in chair.
2. Hold a pillow or rolled up towel firmly on your chest or stomach.
3. Breathe in deeply through your nose and mouth. Your tummy will rise as your lungs fill with air.
4. Hold this breath for a few seconds.
5. Purse your lips as if you were going to whistle and let all the air out through your nose and mouth.
6. Breathe normally for 10-15 seconds.
7. Repeat deep breathing exercises 10 times every hour, breathing normally for 10-15 seconds between each deep breath.
8. After every 5 deep breaths, do 1 or 2 strong coughs (as described below). This means that you should be doing 1 or 2 strong coughs every half hour.

Your pain should be controlled enough to allow you to take deep breaths, cough and start moving around.

If your pain is not controlled, tell your nurse, physiotherapist or doctor.

Coughing after surgery

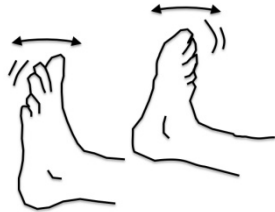
1. Sit up in bed or in a chair and lean forward a little.
2. If you have had surgery in your chest or stomach area, you can lessen the pain of a cough by holding a pillow or rolled up towel firmly on your chest or stomach.
3. Breathe in and out fully.
4. With your mouth open, take in a deep breath. Quickly give 1 or 2 strong coughs.



Take part in your recovery - continued

Exercising your legs while in bed

To help maintain good blood flow, move your feet up and down. Then point your toes away from and towards you. Do this exercise 10 times every hour that you are awake.



Move your ankles in circles. Do this exercise 10 times every hour that you are awake.



To exercise your upper legs while you are in bed, make your thigh muscles tight and press the backs of your knees into the bed. Count to 5 and relax. Do this exercise 10 times every hour that you are awake.



Walking after surgery

On the evening after your surgery, your nurse may help you sit on the side of the bed.

The evening or morning after your surgery your nurse will help you get out of bed and walk. It is important to have help the first few times you get up because you may feel weak or faint.

It is important that you get up and move around as soon as possible after your surgery. You should be walking short distances around the ward within a few days.

Do not walk on your own until your nurse tells you that it is safe for you to walk.