

Patient information

Respiratory physiotherapy – some useful information

What is respiratory physiotherapy?

Respiratory physiotherapy is the term used to describe the job of a specialist Physiotherapist who helps treat, educate and advise patients who have problems with their lungs and their breathing.

At the West Suffolk Hospital you may see us on any of the wards, but more commonly on the Intensive Care Unit, Acute Assessment Unit (AAU) and wards F8, F7, F6 and F5.

We also run outreach clinics at GP surgeries and health clinics providing one-to-one treatment sessions closer to patient's homes in the Bury St Edmunds, Newmarket, Haverhill, Sudbury and Thetford areas.

We are also involved in local pulmonary rehabilitation classes, respiratory exercises groups and 'FIT' group (for those patients who have had a stay on intensive care).

The aim of respiratory physiotherapy is to assess your symptoms, understand how they impact on your daily life and then help you to manage your symptoms better so that you can feel more in control of your breathing.

Why have I been referred to a respiratory physiotherapist?

There are several reasons why you may have been referred to see a respiratory physiotherapist:

- You may have a long term underlying problem with your breathing eg COPD, emphysema, bronchiectasis, asthma, chronic bronchitis or pulmonary fibrosis.
- You may have been newly diagnosed with one of the above breathing problems.

- You may suffer with recurrent chest infections or pneumonia.
- You may have problems with hyperventilation (quick breathing).
- You may have had a recent admission to hospital for problems with your breathing.
- You may have been told you have an abnormal breathing pattern.
- You may get short of breath when walking or on exertion.
- You may have had a recent chest trauma (fractured ribs, bruising).
- You may suffer with anxiety or stress.
- You may struggle with clearing phlegm from your chest.
- You may need advice on how to use your inhalers properly.
- You may have had recent respiratory, abdominal or cardiac surgery.

What will happen at my appointment?

Firstly, you will receive an appointment either by post or by telephone. We would be grateful if you could **please confirm whether or not you can attend the appointment by telephoning our department.** If your appointment is not convenient for you then we will be happy to re-arrange it.

Your appointments will be on a one-to-one basis with a specialist respiratory physiotherapist, but if you would feel more comfortable accompanied, then please bring a friend or relative with you.

Your first appointment will be approximately one hour long. During this appointment the physiotherapist will take a detailed written history of your breathing problems.

We will then assess your breathing pattern and listen to your chest. We will then provide advice, education and suggest gentle exercises, where necessary, that may help you to manage your symptoms.

Follow-up appointments will be half-an-hour long and will involve your Physiotherapist assessing your progress with your exercises and then progressing your treatment.

What happens after my sessions?

The aim of the sessions is to enable you to continue with a daily routine at home to keep your chest as manageable as possible.

However, we may feel that other services may be useful to the management of your breathing problems, ie pulmonary rehabilitation, REG group, Suffolk Wellbeing, Breathe Easy Groups, occupational therapy or speech therapy. If this is the case then we can refer you on to these services, with your permission.

Useful contacts

Physiotherapy Department - Reception
West Suffolk NHS Foundation Trust
Hardwick Lane
Bury St. Edmunds
Suffolk.
IP33 2QZ

Tel: 01284 713300

If you would like any information regarding access to the West Suffolk Hospital and its facilities please visit the website for AccessAble (the new name for DisabledGo)
<https://www.accessable.co.uk/organisations/west-suffolk-nhs-foundation-trust>



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