

Managing Extra Mucus and Controlled Coughing

People with lung disease often have extra amounts of thick, sticky mucus. Having too much mucus makes breathing more difficult and increases your risk of getting a lung infection. You cannot stop your body from producing extra mucus, but there are techniques to help you get rid of the mucus easier.

First, drink plenty of fluids to help thin the mucus and make it easy to cough up. Six to eight glasses of water a day is often how much is recommended. Ask your doctor or rehabilitation specialist how much fluid you should drink.

Once the mucus is thin, you can get rid of it through controlled coughing, postural drainage and chest percussion (refer to handout, Postural Drainage and Percussion). A respiratory therapist will work with you to teach you breathing and coughing techniques.



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Learn more about your health care.

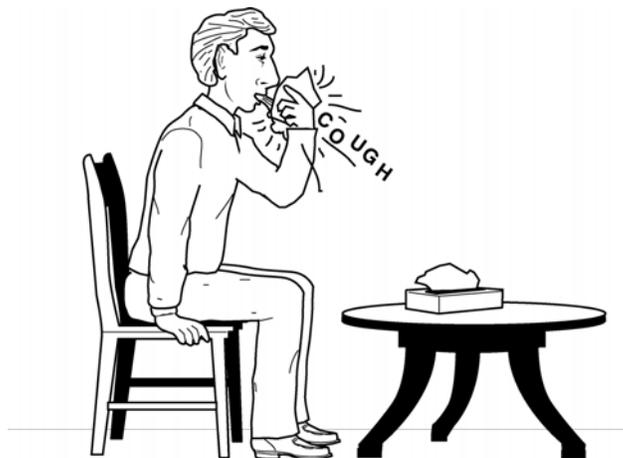
Controlled Coughing

Controlled coughing is a special technique that helps you bring up mucus more easily. Controlling the way you cough forces mucus up and out of your lungs without causing tiredness, shortness of breath, or increased pain, if you have had chest surgery.

1. Sit upright in a chair and bend forward slightly. Take a deep breath in through your nose, and hold it for 2 seconds.



2. Instead of exhaling, through your nose, cough 2 or 3 times with your mouth slightly open. This loosens the mucus with the first cough and moves it upward with the second and third cough. Be careful to not just clear your throat. Use your stomach muscles to help with light coughing.



3. Wait a few seconds then breathe in normally and gently through your nose. Breathing in deeply after you have coughed may force mucus back into your lungs. Repeat these steps again.



- **Talk to your doctor or others on your health care team if you have questions. You may request more written information from the Library for Health Information at (614) 293-3707 or email: health-info@osu.edu.**