

# Physio and your baby

Daily physiotherapy is a very important part of looking after someone with cystic fibrosis.

Mucous lines the lungs in order to trap particles and bacteria and form a protective layer on the surface of the lungs. In CF the mucous is thick and sticky and that makes the normal movement of mucous up and out of the lungs slow and difficult.

Because 'bugs' are moved out of the lungs more slowly in people with CF chest infections can be more frequent and more prolonged.

Chest physiotherapy is important because it helps to move the thick, sticky lung secretions in the air tubes and helps bring them high enough up to allow them to be coughed up. A combination of physiotherapy and medication can help control lung infections and maximise lung health.

## Physiotherapy

One of our specialist physiotherapists will meet you and your child and talk through what physiotherapy involves. There are different types of physiotherapy treatment. Your physio will review these with you.

## Percussion

Percussion consists of a sequence of firm pats to the chest.

A series of positions designed to treat different parts of the chest are used. Your Physio will show you these.

## Baby PEP

'PEP' stands for Positive Expiratory Pressure. Breathing through a PEP creates a small increased pressure within the tubes of the lungs that holds them open. It allows fast moving air to stir up the mucous and move it up the air passages.. This means that when your baby coughs they will clear secretions more easily. The mask looks a bit like a pilot's facemask. It is soft and comfortable and is held over your mouth and nose whilst breathing.

You may find that your baby coughs during or after their physio, but this does not always happen. Babies usually automatically swallow the secretions that are coughed up, so it is not often that you will see anything in their mouth.

The number of treatment sessions a day will vary. Most people do two a day when all is well, increasing to four a day when necessary. If no secretions are present, some people with CF only need chest physiotherapy once a day.

The physios will arrange to come and visit you regularly at home in the first few months to help you develop your confidence with treatment.

## Baby exercise and massage

As for all babies, both exercise and baby massage are beneficial. Incorporating these elements into your babies care will encourage deep breathing as well as physical development.

## When unwell

We encourage all families to contact the CF team at the first inkling that a chest infection may be 'brewing'. This allows us to assess your child and take a cough swab or sputum sample. The cough swab is sent to the labs to identify any organisms which will then allow us to prescribe your child the best antibiotics if needed. Most antibiotic courses for CF will be for 14 days.

If your child is unwell please contact us so we can take a cough swab or sputum sample

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