

## Deep breathing and coughing

Exercises to help your child recover after surgery

After surgery your child should start these exercises while lying in bed. It will help if the head of the bed is raised a little. Later on, your child can do them while sitting in a chair.

Deep breathing and coughing helps to:

- keep your child's lungs expanding fully
- clear mucus from your child's lungs and throat
- reduce the chance of your child getting a chest infection

If your child had abdominal surgery, he or she may find coughing more comfortable if a pillow is held over the incision.

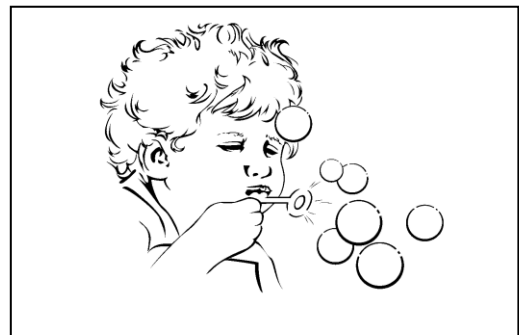
### How to do deep breathing and coughing

Your child can begin doing this exercise lying in bed with his or her knees bent. Later on he or she can do this sitting up in a chair. Instructions for your child:

1. Breathe in as deeply as possible. Hold the breath or keep breathing in for a count of 5.
2. Breathe out slowly through an open mouth.
3. Repeat 10 times.
4. Then make a strong, deep cough. Just clearing the throat is not enough.
5. Repeat this exercise every hour while awake.

There are other ways to encourage your child to take deep breaths, depending on his or her age. For example, your child can use pinwheels, whistles, blow toys and bubbles.

A Physiotherapist may ask your child to use a breathing exercise aid called an incentive spirometer. The therapist will teach your child how to use it.



If your child has problems coughing, huffing is another type of forced breathing that can help your child clear mucus. A Physiotherapist can teach your child how to huff.