Incentive spirometer

Taking deep breaths will fill your lungs with air and help exercise your lungs. Filling your lungs with air is done by breathing in slowly and deeply. This will help open the air sacs in your lungs and may reduce future problems. This will help to keep your lungs healthier during your hospital stay and when you have left the hospital. The incentive spirometer is a breathing device that will help you see how well you are doing with taking deep breaths to keep your lungs healthy.

Learning to use the incentive spirometer is easy. You will want to remember to use your incentive spirometer at least 4 times a day. You should attempt 10 repetitions each time you use the incentive spirometer. Of course, if you want to use it more often that is OK. The more you do this breathing exercise the happier and healthier your lungs will be.

Using the incentive spirometer should help you:

- Increase or maintain your inhaled lung volume (amount of air you breathe in on a single breath);
- Improve your ability to rid your lungs of mucus; and
- Possibly avoid serious lung infection, especially after surgery or a procedure.

Using the incentive spirometer

1. Hold your spirometer with the “smiley” faces (see 1 below) toward you.
2. Attach the open end of the clear “slinky” tube (see 2 below) to the opening at the bottom right of your spirometer and stretch it out. The mouthpiece is at the other end of the tubing.
3. Your respiratory therapist will move the yellow slide on the left side of the spirometer to the correct level for you, according to your age, height and how deeply you are able to breathe now. This shows how much you need to breathe in to fill your lungs.

Your expected amount is ______ mls of air

4. Before starting, blow all the air out of your lungs. We call this exhalation. Then, close your lips tightly around the mouthpiece.

5. Breathe in slowly and deeply through the mouthpiece.
6. While breathing in, watch the “smiley” face marker and keep the yellow marker floating in the box with the “smiley” face. Try to keep the marker away from the “sad” faces.

7. Hold your breath for 3-6 seconds, then remove the mouthpiece and breathe out slowly. Watch the yellow float in the round cylinder to see what the highest number is that you have reached.

8. Breathe normally for a few breaths and then repeat the exercise. If you start to feel lightheaded or dizzy, slow down your breathing, and take a longer time for the exercises with normal breaths between the deep breaths.

9. If you find that you can breathe in deeper than the number set for you, move the yellow slide up and proudly show that you have improved.

Questions?

To learn more about using the incentive spirometer or about taking care of your lungs, talk to your doctor, nurse, or respiratory therapist.