

ROLE OF PHYSIOTHERAPY

22 January, 2016

Physiotherapy has been part of respiratory medicine for over 50 years and is a vital part of therapy for patients, particularly for those with a lot of lung secretions, those with severe breathlessness due to airway obstruction and those with post-operative chest wall pain or limitation.

Patients with bronchiectasis, cystic fibrosis and chronic bronchitis are likely to benefit from learning lung clearance techniques which involves learning breathing techniques, using special devices (Acapella, PEP) and using nebulised saline or other solutions. The Lung Health Clinic has been involved in fostering these techniques in Australia and can refer you to a physiotherapist trained in these techniques.

Pulmonary rehabilitation and exercise programs are classically undertaken by physiotherapists in group sessions and is the single best treatment for patients with severe COPD. We are happy to refer you to such classes and is an important pre-requisite to transplantation and lung volume reduction surgery.

Post operatively it is critical that you can breathe freely or pneumonia can settle in. Minimally invasive surgery is one strategy to avoid this and post-operative pain management and physiotherapy are other approaches. Incentive devices also exist to help strengthen respiratory muscles.

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