



Southport and
Ormskirk Hospital
NHS Trust

PATIENT INFORMATION

Respiratory Management

North West Regional Spinal Injuries
Centre

This booklet is designed as a guide to the management of your chest; your physiotherapist will be able to give any specific advice.

WHY ARE YOU PRONE TO DEVELOPING CHEST INFECTIONS?

Following spinal cord injury the muscles below the level of injury are paralysed, this includes the muscles which help you breath.

The extent of impact on the respiratory system depends upon the level of injury, the main groups are:

Diaphragm	- C3 4 5
Intercostals	- T1 – T 11
Abdominal	- T6 - 12

The diaphragm is a dome shaped muscle which separates the chest from the abdomen; it contracts downwards to bring air into the lungs.

The intercostal muscles lie between the ribs and have activity on breathing in and out. They also provide stability to the rib cage.

The abdominal muscles provide the forceful manoeuvres on breathing out e.g. coughing.

As a result of these muscles being paralysed, the lungs are unable to expand as fully, so at risk of areas becoming collapsed due to plugs of mucus blocking smaller airways.

The weak cough augments the problem through inefficient clearance mechanisms; providing bacteria a suitable

breeding ground in stagnant secretions.

SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF A CHEST INFECTION

- Head cold - stuffy nose, sore throat, earache, headache etc.
- Cough which produces discoloured sputum
- Fever
- Chest tightness
- Shortness of breath
- Weakness
- Fatigue
- Loss of appetite

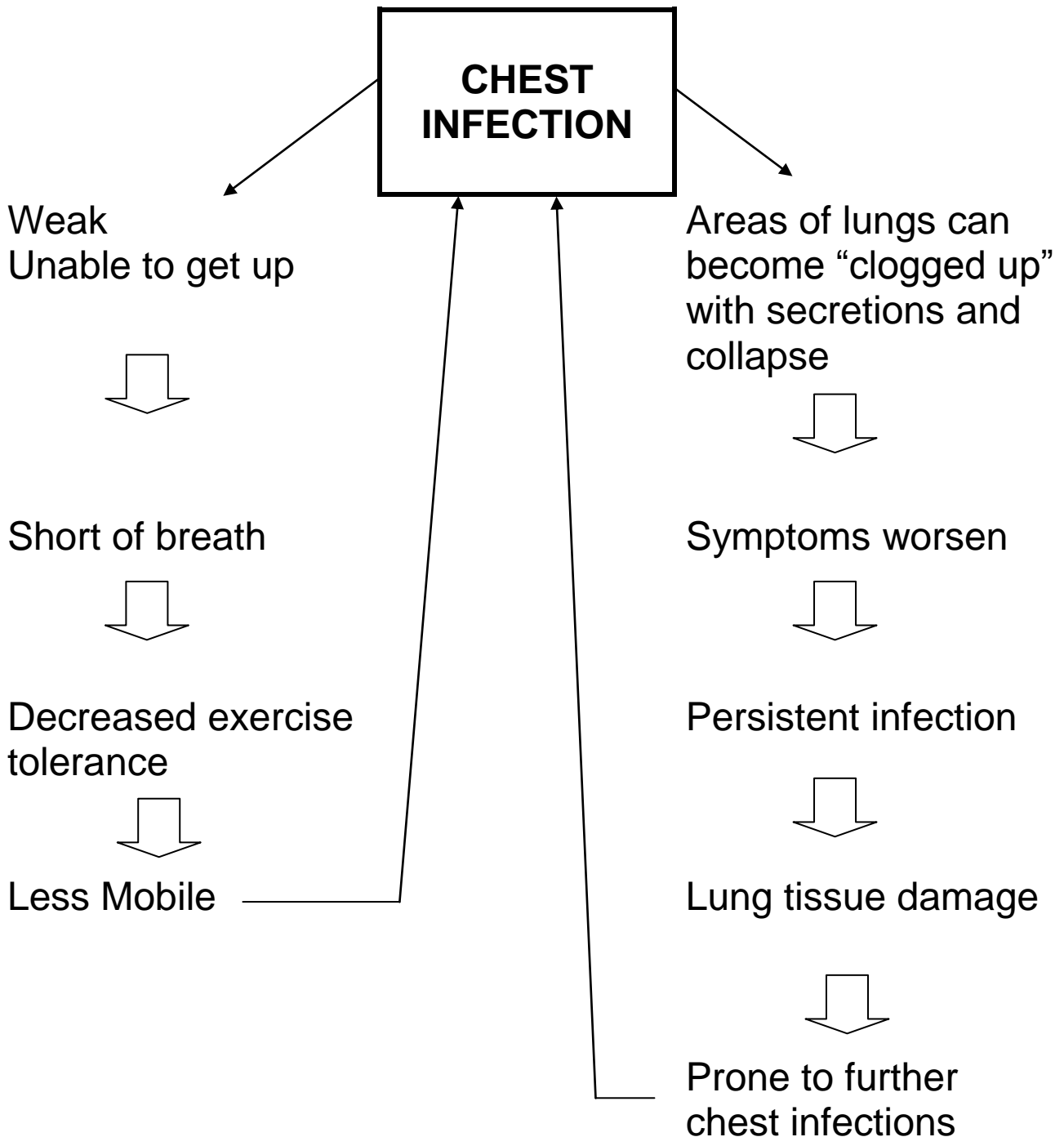
**You are the best judge of how you feel
If you suspect a chest infection take action!**

WHAT SHOULD YOU DO?

- Act quickly
- Start clearing chest yourself or ask for assistance
- Postural drainage (positioning to drain secretions)
- Deep breathing exercise
- Incentive spirometer — can you reach your normal level?
- Assisted Cough
- Drink plenty of fluids especially if you have a temperature. This will help to stop secretions from becoming too thick
- Contact GP and ask to be assessed

- Send a sputum sample to your General Practitioner.

WHY IS IT SO IMPORTANT TO KEEP MY CHEST CLEAR?



WHAT CAN I DO TO HELP MYSELF?

Regular deep breathing exercises incentive spirometer — regular use can exercise if possible.

Regular position changes if in bed, **STOP SMOKING** and avoid passive smoking. Remember it's your health you must be responsible for it and educate those around you.

ASSISTED COUGH

The assisted cough technique is to augment the action of the abdominal muscles to clear secretions from the chest.

If you would like to discuss any issues raised within this leaflet please contact a member of the nursing staff.

Contact:

Nurse in Charge
Ward Office (01704) 704346

Spinal Outpatient Department (01704) 704354

Other sources:

www.spinalnet.co.uk

During your contact with us, it is important that you are happy with your care and treatment. Please speak to a member of staff and/or the ward/department Sister/Charge Nurse if you have any questions or concerns.

MATRON

A Matron is also available during the hours of 9.00 to 5.00 pm Monday to Friday. During these periods, ward/department staff can contact Matron to arrange to meet with you. Out of hours, a Senior Nurse can be contacted via the ward/department to deal with any concerns you may have.

INFECTION CONTROL REQUEST

Preventing infections is a crucial part of our patients' care. To ensure that our standards remain high our staff have regular infection prevention and control training and their practice is monitored in the workplace. We ask patients and visitors to assist us in preventing infections by cleaning their hands at regular intervals and informing staff of areas within the hospital that appear soiled.

As a patient there may be times that you are unsure whether a staff member has cleaned their hands; if in doubt please ask the staff member and they will be only too happy to put your mind at ease by cleaning their hands so that you can see them.

SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS

ANY CONDITION SPECIFIC DANGER SIGNALS TO LOOK OUT FOR:

CONTACT INFORMATION IF YOU ARE WORRIED ABOUT YOUR CONDITION

Your own GP –

OTHER USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS/CONTACTS:

NHS 111

Stop Smoking Helpline (Sefton) - 0300 100 1000

Stop Smoking Helpline (West Lancashire) - 0800 328 6297

**Please call 01704 704714 if you need
this leaflet in an alternative format**

Southport and Ormskirk Hospital NHS Trust

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FOR APPOINTMENTS

Telephone (01695) 656680
Email soh-tr.appointments@nhs.net

Please remember to complete the **attached** *Friends and Family Test*.

Alternatively, you can complete the *Friends and Family Test* on-line by going to: southportandormskirk.nhs.uk/FFT

Thank you

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