



Rancho Los Amigos National Rehabilitation Center
DEPARTMENT OF NURSING
CLINICAL
POLICY AND PROCEDURE

SUBJECT: RESPIRATORY CARE MANAGEMENT:
ASSISTED COUGH

Policy No.: C137.12
Effective Date: 03/1999
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Purpose of Procedure: To provide bronchial hygiene for patients with a poor or ineffective cough.

Physician's Order Required: No

Performed By: All Interdisciplinary Staff

Policy Statement:

1. In non-emergent situations, perform percussion, vibration, and postural drainage prior to assisted cough as indicated.

Procedural Steps:

1. Place your hands over patient's entire epigastric area. For large patients, you may need to spread your fingers over a larger surface area.
If patient is side lying in bed, another staff may be needed to maintain side lying position.
If patient is in a wheelchair, position wheelchair against a wall or have another staff secure back of wheelchair and lock brakes.
2. Instruct patient to take a deep breath.
 - a. If patient is on a ventilator, wait for the delivery of a breath.
3. Coordinate with patient to exhale as you push inward and upward toward the rib cage firmly and quickly to push secretion out by causing more forceful and effective cough.
4. Suction patient's mouth or allow the patient to expectorate secretions into a tissue paper.
5. Repeat PRN.
6. Wash and dry patient's face.
7. Assist patient with rinsing their mouth, as needed.

Patient Education:

1. Before performing an assisted cough, teach patient what to expect before, during, and after the procedure.
2. Teach patient how to direct others to perform an assisted cough.
3. Teach patient how to recognize when an assisted cough is needed.

Documentation:

1. Document the frequency, effectiveness, patient's tolerance, and color, amount and consistency of secretions in

the electronic health record.

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References:

- Nettina, S. M. (2022). *Lippincott manual of nursing practice*. (11th ed.). Philadelphia, PA: Lippincott Williams & Wilkins.
- Parmar K, Gunjal S.B. (2020)Effectiveness of manually assisted cough technique on peak cough flow in patients with spinal cord injury. *International Journal of Research and Review*. 7(2): 243-248.
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- 03/99 – Revised
- 02/02 – Revised
- 11/04 – Reviewed
- 05/08 – Reviewed
- 05/11 – Revised
- 11/14 – Revised
- 12/17 – Revised
- 07/20- Revised
- 12/23- Revised