

Respiratory Therapy: Your Plan for Better Breathing

What is respiratory therapy?

Respiratory [RESS-per-uh-tow-ree] **therapy** is medical care for breathing and the lungs. Your respiratory therapists can help you with:

- Breathing techniques to help you breathe easier or move mucus from your lungs
- Oxygen therapy to make sure your body gets the oxygen it needs to work properly
- Inhaled medicines to treat disease or ease symptoms
- Airway monitoring and management to make sure you're breathing well
- Pulmonary function tests to measure your lung volume and ability to move air in and out
- Collecting blood or sputum samples to diagnose or monitor a lung problem
- Bronchoscopy to help your doctor see into your lungs or get a tissue sample
- Education about your lung problems and how to manage it according to your doctor's orders

Why do I need respiratory therapy?

Your doctor may recommend respiratory therapy for any of these conditions:

- Asthma
- Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD)
- Cystic fibrosis
- Trauma or accidents
- Smoke inhalation
- Illness

You may also need respiratory care after surgery or a procedure, or during a lung test to assess your condition.



Respiratory therapists help people who are sick or recovering from surgery, or have a long-term lung disease such as asthma, bronchitis, emphysema, or cystic fibrosis.

What is a respiratory therapist?

A **respiratory therapist** is a medical provider who is specially trained to help with lung problems. At Intermountain Healthcare facilities, **respiratory therapists wear dark-green-colored scrub uniforms.**

Respiratory therapists work in all areas of a hospital. They also provide services at specialty sleep labs, as part of medical homecare visits, and in outpatient facilities.

Your respiratory therapist will follow the plan of care outlined by your doctor. Your plan may include therapy, tests, and education. The back of this handout outlines your respiratory therapy plan of care. Go over it with your therapist and be sure to ask any questions you may have.

My Plan for respiratory therapy

The following are recommended or scheduled as part of your plan of care.

Lung volume expansion: _____

Mucus clearance: _____

Device(s) for delivering inhaled medicines:

Nebulizer

Metered dose inhaler (MDI)

Dry powder inhaler (DPI)

Soft mist inhaler

Other: _____

Your medication regimen:

Your **quick-relief medicine**
(bronchodilator):



Your **daily control medicine**
(corticosteroid or anti-inflammatory):

Advair

Asmanex

Flovent

Pulmicort

Spiriva

Symbicort

Other: _____



Oxygen therapy

Airway and /or ventilator monitoring and management (care for ventilators, tracheostomy tubes, airway tubes, and other artificial airways)

Other therapies, including PAP devices for sleep apnea or sleep disturbances:

Tests:

Collection of blood or sputum samples

Bronchoscopy

Pulmonary function tests

Sleep apnea testing

Education and home rehab services:

Advance care planning discussions

Asthma education

COPD education

Medicine and breathing device training

Pulmonary rehabilitation services

Respiratory care discharge plan

Sleep apnea education

Tobacco cessation education and support

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