

Let's Talk About...

Breathing exercises: Huff coughing

Huff coughing is a gentle way of coughing that helps clear mucus from the lungs.

What is huff coughing?

Coughing is the natural way of getting mucus out of the lungs. Huffing is a gentle way of coughing. Your child will perform huffs at two different levels.

- Low-lung volume huffs help move mucus from the smaller airways lower in the lungs to the larger airways.
- High-lung volume huffs help move mucus from the larger airways up and out of the lungs.

Why does my child need to perform huff coughing?

Children who have lung conditions, like cystic fibrosis, may benefit from huff coughing. It can help them remove mucus from their airways. Huff coughing is a gentler form of coughing because you keep an open glottis (opening between the vocal cords) while exhaling. This makes it easier to move mucus out of the lungs.

How does my child perform huff coughing?

Have your child follow these instructions to perform huff coughing:

Low-level huffs

- 1 Take a normal-sized breath through your nose using your diaphragm.
- 2 Hold your breath for 3 seconds.
- 3 Fully exhale with an open glottis. It may help to whisper the word “huff” while breathing out.

Perform 3 low-level huffs.

High-level huffs

- 1 Take a deep breath in through your nose until you can't take in any more air. Then sniff to take in even more air.
- 2 Hold your breath for 3 seconds.
- 3 Perform short, quick, forced exhalation with an open glottis.

Perform 3 high-level huffs.



