



# ***Patient & Family Education***

## **Deep Breathing and Coughing**

To help keep your lungs clear, you may be told by your doctor or nurse to perform deep breathing and coughing. Especially after surgery, this will help you get better faster and help prevent complications. If you already have lung problems, this will help you breathe easier.

### **Deep-Breathing**

1. Sit straight up in a chair or on the edge of the bed. If you are not able to do this, lie on your back with your knees slightly bent.
2. If you've had surgery on your chest or stomach, hold a pillow firmly against your incision to "splint" the incision. Otherwise, put the palm of one hand on your upper abdomen just above your stomach. Put the palm of the other hand on your chest.
3. Breathe out normally.
4. Breathe in very deeply through your nose. Imagine filling your lungs as full as they will go. You will feel your stomach push out as you breathe in.
5. Pucker your lips as if you were going to blow out a candle and blow out slowly through your mouth.
6. Rest for a few seconds and then repeat as many times as directed by your doctor or nurse.

### **Coughing**

1. Follow the above steps #1-4
2. Cough 2 or 3 times in a row as you push all of the air out of your lungs.
3. Relax and breathe normally. Repeat as directed.

*This information is only a summary. It should not be used as a substitute for consultation with your doctor or other health care provider regarding your particular medical condition.*