

If you have any questions, please ask your nurse.

Preventing Pneumonia

Routine mouth care, activity, and deep breathing exercises can help prevent pneumonia. Your nurse will review this care with you in more detail.

Oral Care

Brush your teeth and use mouthwash in the morning and at night before going to sleep. This will help decrease bacteria (or germs) in your mouth.

Activity

Stay as active as you can. As allowed, walk in the halls at least 3 times a day and eat all meals in a chair. Nursing staff can assist you as needed.

Deep Breathing and Coughing Exercises

Use an incentive spirometer 10 times every hour while you are awake. This will help you breathe deeply and cough. Your nurse will show you how to do this. Follow these steps.

Incentive Spirometer Use

1. Close your lips tightly around the mouthpiece.
2. Breathe in slowly and deeply through your mouth. The blue disc will rise as you breathe in – try to make it reach the 4000 mark.
3. Hold your breath for 3 to 6 seconds to keep the disc at the highest level you can. Once you can keep the disc at that level most of the time, try a higher level.
4. Release the mouthpiece and breathe out slowly.
5. Cough to help clear mucous from your throat and chest.

Cough deeply from your belly, not just from your throat. If you had surgery (chest or abdomen), first brace the area with a pillow or folded blanket. Take pain medicine as prescribed to control any pain, if needed. Follow these guidelines during your hospital stay and as you recover at home.

View the video **“Preventing Complications after Surgery.”**

Use the bedside phone to dial 6-2585. Follow the prompts to enter the order number (475 English), (476 Spanish). Then turn to the assigned viewing channel.

Para asistencia en español, por favor llamar al Departamento de Representantes para Pacientes al 312.926.3112.

The entities that come together as Northwestern Medicine are committed to representing the communities we serve, fostering a culture of inclusion, delivering culturally competent care, providing access to treatment and programs in a nondiscriminatory manner and eliminating healthcare disparities. For questions, please call either Northwestern Memorial Hospital's Patient Representatives Department at 312.926.3112, TDD/TTY 312.926.6363 and/or the Northwestern Medical Group Patient Representatives Department at 312.695.1100, TDD/TTY 312.695.3661.

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Preventing Post-Operative Pneumonia—Track Your Progress

Patient Name: _____ Room Number: _____

I have watched the video “Preventing Complications after Surgery.” Date _____

Routine mouth care, activity, and deep breathing exercises can help prevent pneumonia.
Your nurse will review this care with you in more detail.

Use this chart to record the times you complete the activities.

Breathing Exercises			
Use the Incentive Spirometer 10 times every hour while you are awake. Chart how high you can raise the disc (0-4000) 3 times a day.			
	Morning	Afternoon	Evening
Day 1			
Day 2			
Day 3			
Day 4			

Mouth Care		
Brush your teeth and use mouthwash in the morning and at night before bedtime.		
	Morning	Bedtime
Day 1		
Day 2		
Day 3		
Day 4		

Sit in Chair					
Sit upright in a chair for meals at least 3 times a day. Nursing staff can assist you as needed.					
	Morning	Breakfast	Lunch	Dinner	Evening
Day 1					
Day 2					
Day 3					
Day 4					

Walk					
Walk in the halls at least 3 times a day. Nursing staff can assist you as needed.					
	Morning	Afternoon (early)	Afternoon (late)	Evening	Other
Day 1					
Day 2					
Day 3					
Day 4					