



Prevent winter chest infections

Here are a few tips to help prevent chest infections.

1. Environment

Indoors – *Keep your house warm and dry*

- Some examples:
- keeping indoor temperature minimum of 18°
 - put lids on pots when cooking to reduce moisture
 - vent dryers to the outside
 - open windows on a fine day
 - air the bed covers over end of bed

Keep your Home hygienic

- Limit use of strong smelling cleaners, air fresheners and fly sprays.
- Dust with a damp cloth
- Have a smoke free home

Outdoors

- Wear an extra layer of clothing on cold days, including a hat.
- Wheelchair bound people get colder than people who can move themselves, so ensure they feel warm.



The following websites have extensive information about environmental factors and respiratory health

- The Australian Lung Foundation - www.lungfoundation.com.au
- The Asthma Foundation – www.asthmafoundation.org.nz

2. Activity and positioning

Regular physical activity is important for good chest health, especially during winter.

Ideas include: walking and running games, catching a ball, singing, dancing, exercise classes, exercycling, laughing, swimming, blowing games (bubbles, whistles, straws)

For people who **cannot** move themselves, changing their position regularly is important.

Ideas include: tilting the wheelchair, resting on the bed, time on the floor, sitting in a lounge chair, changing position at night.



3. Swallowing Problems.

People with swallowing problems are more prone to chest infections as food and fluid can enter the lungs (aspiration). To prevent this:

- Consult a Speech Language Therapist (SLT), who will prescribe an Eating and Drinking Plan to help prevent aspiration.
- When eating and drinking, sit in an upright position (90°). Contact the SLT if this cannot be achieved.

If you are feeding others, feed one person at a time. This prevents cross contamination from saliva and coughing.

4. Oral hygiene and saliva

Oral bacteria can cause chest infections, especially for people who have swallowing difficulties. To reduce the likelihood of a chest infection:

- Clean teeth/mouth twice daily
- Good positioning



5. General Health

- For those with known respiratory conditions – have a plan and monitor it regularly.
- Use correct inhaler techniques – seek advice for correct use and care of inhalers from your Health Advisor.
- General personal hygiene – cough and sneeze away from people, and regularly clean hands and surfaces



For more advice contact Therapy Professionals Ltd.

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