



## Prevention of Chest Infections - Top Tips

The following advice can help to reduce, avoid and recover from respiratory infections.

### 1. Environment



#### ***Indoors***

- 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



*Hygiene about the house* - look at your use of chemical cleaners.

The Asthma Foundation recommends:

- using Green Works Natural Spray Cleaner Multi Purpose which can be found in most supermarkets.
- limiting the use of strong smelling cleaners, air fresheners, and fly sprays.

#### ***Outdoors***

- Wear an extra layer of clothing on cold days, including a hat.
- Wheelchair bound people get colder than people who can move themselves
- Pollen – high levels of pollen may irritate asthma

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

- The Lung Foundation Australia - <https://lungfoundation.com.au>
- The Asthma Foundation – <https://www.asthmafoundation.org.nz>

### 2. Positioning and Activity:

#### ***Positioning***

- regular changes in position are important for people who cannot move themselves.

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

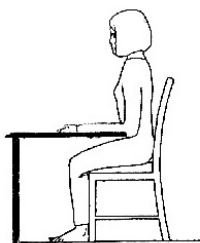
## Activity

- regular physical activity is important for good chest health, especially during the winter.

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

## 3. Feeding

- Eating and Drinking Plans are prescribed by the Speech Language Therapist (SLT), and help prevent aspiration for people with Eating and Drinking Difficulties. Always contact the SLT if changes are necessary, even if they are short term.
- The recommended position for eating and drinking is seated upright (90°). Contact the SLT if this cannot be achieved.



- Feed one person at a time, especially if they are unwell. This prevents cross contamination from saliva and coughing and allows you to watch carefully that they are eating and drinking safely.

## 4. General Health

- Known respiratory conditions – people with asthma, COPD or Bronchiectasis should have a team management plan with regular monitoring.
- Correct inhaler techniques – seek advice for correct use and care of inhalers from your Health Advisor.
- General personal hygiene – regular hand washing, coughing and sneezing into a tissue or your elbow, and regular cleaning all help to prevent spread of illness.



## 5. When unwell

- Coughing - A strong cough will clear mucus and food particles from airways. Coughing during meal times should be reviewed by SLT. Coughing will spread infection. Manage the risk of illness spreading by positioning the person away from others and regular cleaning of surfaces.
- Give the ill person small, light meals and extra fluids 8 plus cups a day. Contact the SLT if the person is having difficulty eating and drinking as a result of other illness.
- Record fluid intake.

## 6. Oral hygiene and saliva

Oral bacterial can cause chest infections, especially for people who have swallowing difficulties.

- Teeth cleaning twice daily is an important part of preventing chest infection.
- Aspiration of saliva into the lungs increases the risk of chest infections. This can be reduced by maintaining good oral hygiene and good positioning.



Therapy Professionals Ltd's therapists can help many ways during illness. Please feel free to contact us for information and advice.

**Phone:** 03 377 5280  
**Email:** [admin@tpl.nz](mailto:admin@tpl.nz)  
**Website:** [www.therapyprofessionals.co.nz](http://www.therapyprofessionals.co.nz)