



Information for You from Your Health Care Team

Chest Physiotherapy (Chest PT, CPT)

What is Chest Physiotherapy (CPT):

The purpose of chest PT is to clear the lungs of mucus. It is done by clapping on the chest and by positioning your child to help move mucus to the larger airways where it can be coughed and/or suctioned out.

How often is Chest PT done:

Chest PT is usually done every 8 to 12 hours, depending on your child's needs. It can be done more often if needed.

Good times to do Chest PT:

One good time to do Chest PT is in the morning before your child has eaten breakfast. This will remove the secretions that have built up during the night and clear their lungs so they can begin their day.

Another good time is right before your child goes to bed. This prepares your child for a restful night.

How to Prepare to do Chest Pt on Your Child:

Prepare yourself by relaxing your shoulders, arms and wrists. Cup your hands, holding your thumb and fingers together. Proper hand position is very important; it will create an air cushion between your hand and your child's chest. If you hold your hands flat, the Chest PT will not be as effective and you may hurt your child.



Cup your hands

Chest PT is done by crisply, but gently, clapping your child's chest. It should make a "chopping" sound.

How to Position your Child for Chest Pt:

Ask your child's nurse about positioning your child. If possible, your child should be positioned with his/her head lowered. In this position, the force of gravity helps to draw the secretions to the larger, upper airways where they can be coughed or suctioned out. Placing your child over your lap with his/her head lowered (if your child is small) or placing him/her in bed with the head of the bed lowered may be helpful.

A light blanket or baby blanket may be used to provide some cushioning. If Chest PT is done properly, it will not hurt your child. In fact, many children fall asleep during the treatment.



Positioning your child

Chest Physiotherapy (Chest PT, CPT) (continued)

Where should Chest PT be done:

There are 6 basic areas for Chest PT: right-front, back and side and left-front, back and side. The lungs are located underneath the ribs. Be careful not to do Chest PT below the ribs, as this could damage your child's kidneys, liver or spleen. Your hands should always clap at least one inch above the ribs. Also, try not to clap on your child's collar bone, shoulder blades, backbone or sternum (the bone that runs down the front of the chest). Have your child sit up and cough after each position is clapped.

How long should Chest PT done:

The time it takes for chest PT will vary on your child's size and condition. Follow the directions you are given by your child's doctor or respiratory therapist.

Other Important Information:

Whenever you are doing Chest PT, always watch your child closely for signs of trouble breathing such as:

- Coughing
- Breathing hard
- Bluish color around the lips
- Increased breathing rate

If your child begins coughing, sit him/her up until the coughing stops. If he/she is not having any trouble breathing, reposition your child and finish clapping.

Chest PT may loosen a lot of secretions or a "plug", which may cause your child to have trouble breathing. If this happens, suction your child or let him/her cough into a tissue then let him/her take a little break. Watch your child closely during the rest of the Chest PT and suction or have them cough again, if necessary. Call your child's doctor if your child continues to have trouble breathing.



Right and Left Front

Speak up if you have any questions or concerns