

# *Caring for Your Child's* HEALTH

Your child's doctor wants you to do chest physical therapy (CPT) treatments with your child. Doing CPT may seem awkward at first. The therapist will help you learn, and you will feel more confident as you practice.

CPT has three steps:

- Putting your child in different *positions* to help drain the mucus out of the lungs. (This is called postural drainage.)
- **Clapping** your child's chest to loosen the mucus. (This is called percussion.)
- Letting your child *cough* to get the mucus out of the lungs.

The therapist will show you what positions to use, where to clap, and how long to clap each area. The therapist will also give you illustrations to guide you.

## How CPT Helps

CPT helps your child get mucus out of his or her lungs. Everyone's lungs make mucus. This mucus coats the lining of the airways and catches dust and germs from the air we breathe in. Mucus helps keep the lungs healthy. Most of us get rid of this mucus by clearing our throats or by coughing slightly.

## How To Do Chest Physical Therapy

Too much mucus makes breathing difficult. If the lungs are infected, they make even more mucus than usual. When you do CPT, the positions and

the clapping work together to move mucus out of your child's lungs. Removing this mucus helps the lungs recover more rapidly and more completely.

If you do not understand the reason for your child's chest physical therapy, please ask the doctor or therapist.

## How To Do CPT

### **Step 1: Position Your Child**

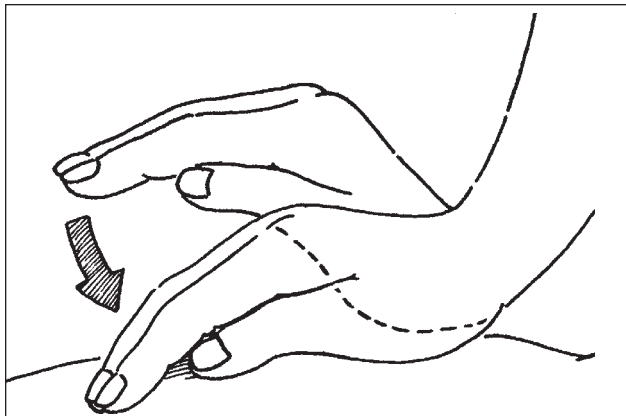
If your child is small, you can do CPT with your child on your lap. If your child is larger or if holding your child on your lap isn't comfortable, position your child on a flat surface. For example, many parents place their children on the bed or on the floor. You can use a foam backrest or pillows to get your child in the right position. If you have any questions about how to position your child at home, talk with the therapist.

### **Step 2: Clap Your Child**

Cup your hand to clap your child. By cupping your hand, you trap air between your hand and your child's chest or back. This air creates a

gentle force that helps loosen the mucus. Make sure there is no space between your thumb and index finger.

Your hand should make a hollow sound as you clap. If your hand is flat, you will slap your child, and that will hurt. Remember, the gentle force comes from the air trapped under your hand, not from the hand itself.



*As you clap, let the movement come from your wrist. If you move your arm and shoulder, you are more likely to become tired and sore. Clapping should be steady, smooth, and rhythmical.*

It is important to clap only on your child's rib cage. Do not clap on the backbone, breastbone, or stomach.

Keep a thin layer of cloth between your hand and your child's skin. This can be a t-shirt, a sheet, or a thin towel. This will make the clapping more comfortable for your child.

For most positions, you can clap with either hand, whichever is more comfortable for you. With older children you may be able to use both hands at the same time.

### **Step 3: Let Your Child Cough**

If your child is old enough to cooperate, encourage him or her to cough after you clap each area. Even very young children may cough during CPT. If your child starts to cough, let him or her finish coughing before you go on to the next position. The coughing helps get rid of the mucus.

Encourage your child to spit the mucus out, if possible. However, this is very hard for many children to do. Don't worry if your child swallows the mucus. It will simply go into your child's stomach, and it will be out of the lungs.

You can show your child how to cough effectively:

- Sit with the body bent slightly forward.
- Take a breath in.
- Tighten stomach muscles with each cough.
- With the mouth slightly open, cough deeply. The cough should be deep, not just in the throat.
- After each cough, take another breath.

### **When To Do CPT**

The therapist will help you work out a schedule for your child's CPT that fits into your family routine. It may be hard to do all the CPT treatments yourself. Talk with the therapist or your doctor if you want to arrange for someone else to learn CPT.

There is space on the next page for you to write out your child's CPT schedule. As you plan, keep these points in mind:

- Try to do CPT first thing in the morning. If your child has more than one CPT treatment each day, try to do CPT first thing in the morning and last thing at night. If your child has more than two CPT treatments, space them out over the day as much as possible.
- Do CPT before meals, or wait at least 1 hour after your child eats. Doing CPT right after your child eats can upset his or her stomach or even make your child vomit.
- If your child is having breathing treatments, do CPT after the breathing treatment. The medicines used in the breathing treatments help open the airways and loosen the mucus. This makes it easier to get the mucus out with CPT.

My child needs CPT \_\_\_\_\_ times a day:

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## Helping Your Child Cooperate

You can do the different positions in any order. Some children like to choose which position to do first.

A fun activity may help your child cooperate with CPT. Your child can watch TV or a special video, listen to music or a story, read or look at a book, or talk about what happened during the day. If possible, let your child choose the activity. With young children (under 6), it usually works best to offer two choices and let them pick one.

Encourage and praise your child for any help or cooperation he or she gives you during CPT. Assure your child that the CPT is helping his or her lungs get well.

## Side Effects

Like other medical treatments, CPT may cause side effects. Most of these will go away by themselves, if you stop the CPT for a few minutes. Here are side effects some children experience, and what to do about them.

### ***Coughing Too Hard***

Children who cannot stop coughing long enough to catch their breath are coughing too hard. If this happens, stop the CPT treatment for a while. When your child can breathe easily again, re-

sume the CPT.

### ***Difficulty Breathing (Shortness of Breath)***

Some children start breathing faster than usual. Other children may gasp or have a hard time catching their breath. If this happens, stop the CPT treatment and let your child sit up. When your child is breathing normally again, you can finish the CPT.

### ***Soreness or Pain***

If your child complains of soreness, stop the treatment for a moment. Make sure you are cupping your hand the right way. Check to see that you are clapping in the right places. Also be sure your child is wearing a t-shirt or has some other thin cloth between your hand and his or her skin. Reassure your child and resume the CPT.

### ***Crying***

Many small children cry during CPT treatments because they don't like having to lie still. Giving your child something to do may help. (There are ideas you may find helpful in the section "Helping Your Child Cooperate.") Praise your child for cooperating with you even if he or she cries, and continue with the CPT treatment.

### ***Nausea***

Some children feel sick to their stomachs after a CPT treatment if they swallow a lot of mucus. If your child feels nauseated during a CPT treatment but does not throw up, let him or her rest for a while before going on. If your child throws up during CPT, stop that treatment. Remember, if your child has had anything to eat or drink, you need to wait 1 hour before doing a CPT treatment.

### ***Dizziness***

If your child complains of being dizzy, stop for a while. Let your child lie flat and relax. When the dizzy feeling passes, you can finish the CPT.

## When You Have Questions

When you have questions or concerns, talk with your child's doctor. The doctor may refer you to a specialist in CPT who may be a chest physical therapist or respiratory care practitioner.

Ask for suggestions on what you can do, if side effects are making it hard to do CPT or if a particular position is causing problems.

*Call your child's doctor if side effects are severe.*

## Phone Numbers

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## Notes

Ask your child's doctor to explain when and how much your child's symptoms should improve. Your doctor may also give you special instructions. When your child sees the doctor for a follow-up visit, ask how much longer you need to do CPT treatments.

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*Developed by the Departments of Chest Physical Therapy, Respiratory Care, Pulmonary Medicine, and Educational Resources*



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