

Care of Children with Neuromuscular Disease During a Cold

During a cold, children with muscle weakness can have a very hard time clearing mucus from their lower airway. **You can help them by following these steps.**

Follow these steps in the order shown below every four hours and as needed while the child has a cold.

1. Cough machine, four sets of 5 breaths
2. Chest physiotherapy for 10-20 minutes
3. Cough machine, four sets of 5 breaths
4. Postural drainage for 15-30 minutes (if needed)
5. Cough machine, four sets of 5 breaths

Use the cough machine every time you hear rattling or your child has trouble coughing out mucus. You cannot use this machine too much. If your child cannot get mucus out of the back of their throat, suction the mouth.

If your child is on BiPAP, use the BiPAP machine with a nasal mask every time your child sleeps. Also use it if your child naps during the day. Your child is weaker than normal during colds and may need constant BiPAP use while sick.

Use the oximeter to check your child's oxygen levels once per day when well and three times per day and as needed when sick. If your child's oxygen level is less than 94%, use the cough machine to clear mucus and recheck the oxygen level.

When to Call

- **Low oxygen levels:** Call if the oxygen level is 92% or less and using the cough machine is not increasing the oxygen level. Your child may need to be in the hospital for more treatment.
- **Vomiting:** Your child may become dehydrated if vomiting. This can be very serious for children with neuromuscular weakness. Please call right away.

Who to Call

Pediatric Pulmonary Clinic
608-263-6420

If you are a patient receiving care at UnityPoint – Meriter, Swedish American or a health system outside of UW Health, please use the phone numbers provided in your discharge instructions for any questions or concerns.

Your health care team may have given you this information as part of your care. If so, please use it and call if you have any questions. If this information was not given to you as part of your care, please check with your doctor. This is not medical advice. This is not to be used for diagnosis or treatment of any medical condition. Because each person's health needs are different, you should talk with your doctor or others on your health care team when using this information. If you have an emergency, please call 911. Copyright © 8/2020 University of Wisconsin Hospitals and Clinics Authority. All rights reserved. Produced by the Department of Nursing. HF#5530