

The Acapella® Choice

Physiotherapy Service

What is the Acapella Choice?

The Acapella Choice is a treatment for children and adults who need help to clear secretions (sputum/phlegm/mucus) from their lungs.

What does it consist of?

It consists of:

- A mouthpiece
- A cover
- A counterweighted plug and magnet
- A base unit including the adjustment dial



How does the Acapella choice work?

When you breathe out through the Acapella, air flows through the counterweighted plug and magnet. This temporarily increases the pressure in your airways, splinting them open, helping to get air behind your sputum and move it upwards in readiness for you to clear.

At the same time the exhaled air is intermittently blocked with a pivoting cone, this sends vibrations into your airways to help loosen the secretions.

There is a frequency adjustment dial at the end of the Acapella (numbered 1-5). You can increase or decrease the resistance/frequency of the vibrations by turning it clockwise or anti-clockwise. Find the resistance which is most comfortable for you and gives the most vibrations.

How to use the Acapella

Your physiotherapist will show you how to use the Acapella and suggest how often you should use it:

1. Sit upright, or sit at a table with your elbows resting on it and your back straight. You need to have your chin tilted up slightly.
2. Put the Acapella in your mouth over your bottom teeth so that it rests on your tongue. Form a good seal around the mouthpiece with your lips.
3. Slowly breathe in through the Acapella, taking a slightly deeper breath than normal.
4. Pause for 2-3 seconds, this lets the air fill all of your lungs.
5. Breathe out through the Acapella.
6. Perform 10 breaths. Try to avoid coughing during these breaths.
7. Take the Acapella out of your mouth and perform 2-3 huffs (a fast breath out like you are steaming up a mirror).

8. Finally cough to clear any mucus that you may have loosened. Follow this with some relaxed breathing for about 10-20 seconds.
9. Repeat steps 1-8 until you have reached the number of cycles advised by your physiotherapist. Your treatment should take you approximately 20 minutes.

Note: If your cheeks vibrate a lot during this technique you should either tense them, or, if you cannot manage this, hold your cheeks still (with your fingers and thumb of your free hand) so that all the vibration goes down into your lungs.

How to clean your Acapella

It is recommended you clean your Acapella after each use by taking it apart and washing it in hot soapy water and air drying the parts before re-assembling them.

To take it apart detach the mouthpiece and then the cover by placing your forefinger and thumb on the body of the Acapella at the mouthpiece end. Squeeze your thumb and finger together and gently lift the cover up. Gently detach the rocker from the base of the Acapella.

Things to look out for

If you notice you are coughing more and your treatment is not clearing your chest it is important to let the respiratory team know, as they may suggest changing your current treatment.

The following are exceedingly rare events but you should stop doing your Acapella immediately if:

- you suddenly become short of breath,
- experience any acute pain
- there is a significant change in the colour of the sputum.

The respiratory team should advise you what to do and who to contact if any of these things occur.

If you have broken your Acapella or notice any cracks in it, again, stop using it and let your respiratory team know.

Your physiotherapist's name: _____

Date this leaflet was given to you: _____

How many breaths in a row before huffing: _____

How many cycles of breaths and hugs in one treatment session: _____

How many sessions of Acapella day: _____

Any other advice: _____

This document is available in Welsh / Mae'r ddogfen hon ar gael yn Gymraeg