

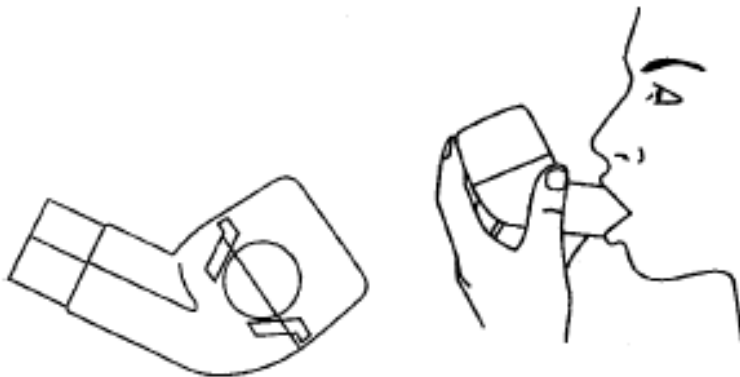
## **What is the Flutter?**

The Flutter 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 is a pipe-shaped device which is made up of 4 parts:

- a mouthpiece
- a steel ball which sits in a cone
- a perforated cover



## **How does The Flutter work?**

When you breathe out through the Flutter, the air in the airways vibrates as the ball rises and falls. This loosens the mucus from the airway walls.

The Flutter also increases the pressure in the airways, keeping them open as you breathe out. This helps the air to get behind the secretions and allows mucus to move upwards.

Finally, it allows air to accelerate as it leaves the lungs and so helps to shear the mucus from the airway walls.

## **How to use the Flutter**

Your physiotherapist will show you how to use the Flutter and suggest how often you should use it. This leaflet is to remind you of what they said.

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 Flutter 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 your nose, taking a slightly deeper breath than normal.
4. Pause for 2-3 seconds, this lets the air fill your lungs.
5. Breathe out through the Flutter. Adjust the angle you hold it at until you feel the most "fluttering"/vibration in your chest and try to keep it at this angle.
6. Do 8-10 breaths, in through your nose and out through the Flutter. Avoid coughing during these breaths.
7. Take the Flutter out of your mouth and do 1-2 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 your chest feels clear when you huff, or until your physiotherapist has suggested you stop (this may be 15-20 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.

Your Physiotherapist may also suggest you can do 1-2 fast and long breaths out through the Flutter instead of huffing at the end of each cycle. This is another way to move the mucus up out of your lungs.

### **How to clean your Flutter**

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

You can also disinfect the Flutter at least once a week by putting the parts in a pan, adding boiling water to them and boiling for 10 minutes. Remember the parts, especially the ball, will be very hot, and should be handled with great care. You can also use a steam steriliser. Do not use chlorine based disinfectant products and never use a microwave steriliser.

### **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 CF team know, as they may suggest changing your current treatment.

The following are exceedingly rare events. You should stop doing your Flutter immediately if you suddenly become short of breath, experience any acute pain or you notice any significant change in the colour of the sputum you are bringing up. The CF team should advise you what to do and who to contact if any of these things occur.

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 huffs in one treatment session:

\_\_\_\_\_

How many sessions of Flutter a day: \_\_\_\_\_

**Any other advice**

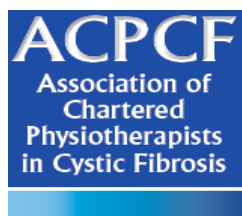
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If you have broken your Flutter or notice any cracks in it, again, stop using it and let your CF team know.



Leaflet 2 from the Airway Clearance Techniques Series

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Graphics from the internet.