Patient information factsheet

Manual assisted cough (or MAC)

What is a manual assisted cough?
A technique used to enhance your own cough strength to help with clearance of secretions. It can be carried out when you are lying down or sitting upright.

Why is it used?
- Your condition has led to weakness in the muscles which usually enable you to cough. This means you may sometimes have difficulty clearing secretions from your chest.
- It’s important to clear secretions in order to maintain clear and healthy lungs.
- By using this technique you can decrease the risk of repeated chest infections and complications, which can improve your quality of life.

How is a manual assisted cough carried out?
- Your therapist or nurse will find a position comfortable for you.
- They will place their hands/forearms on and below your rib cage and instruct you to cough.
- In time with this, they will perform a forceful, inwards-and-upwards movement which will enhance the strength of your cough.
- This should not be painful.

Further information

Please inform the member of staff assisting you if:
- You have not opened your bowels for more than 24 hours or are suffering from constipation
- You feel nauseous
- The movement causes any pain
- You feel suddenly short of breath

Adapted from uhs.nhs.uk 2018