

## **Physiotherapy Advice for Swine Flu.**

West Sussex GP's are now offering inoculations for Swine Flu. Remember to check the relevant local NHS websites such as (<http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/pandemic-flu/Pages/Introduction.aspx>) regarding current information on who qualifies as priority for receiving the vaccine.

When people get chest infections or are struggling for breath they are often breathing with just the top part of their lungs (apical breathing) the result of this is that they tend to breathe very shallowly and quickly. It is usually helpful to slow down the breathing pattern and try to get more air into the lower parts of the lungs (lateral breathing) under the rib cage. Below is a simple breathing activity to help control your breathing pattern. It consists of 3 simple steps to form one cycle of breathing and then this is repeated as often as you are comfortably able to do so usually building to about 10 breath cycles. So get yourself into a comfortable position, breathe out slowly and:

1. Breathe in slowly over the count of about 4 seconds
2. Hold your in breath for the count of 2 seconds
3. Breathe out slowly over the count of 4 seconds.

Interestingly it is usually always the breathing in that is easy and the breathing out that is often the hardest, especially if you are struggling for breath. It is important to only breathe a 'normal' breath size and just to slow this down. If you can't do the 4:2:4 count then make it 3:1:3 or talk to your physiotherapist for more advice.

If you are caring for someone who is unable to understand the above method then I suggest you try talking to them slowly and calmly and this may well help them slow their breathing down. If you have any questions or concerns about your chest care or how to help make your breathing easier then please contact your local physiotherapist.

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