

Cycle of Debilitation from Respiratory Disease

- You first feel short of breath from moderate exertion.
- You then avoid such activities to control shortness of breath. But lack of activity causes muscles to weaken and weak muscles use more oxygen than strong ones.
- You soon feel short of breath from mild exercise such as walking, and may make the mistake of further avoiding exercise.
- As the body further weakens, you can become short of breath when bathing, dressing and even at rest.

*** Break this downward cycle!!! Exercise and stay active!!!***

How to monitor your pulse:

During your program, the staff will train you to take your own pulse. Checking your pulse during exercise helps you know if you are working within your "target heart rate range" and is one measure used to determine how hard you are working. If you are unable to find your pulse, let the rehab staff know, and we will practice these techniques with you or make other suggestions.

To check your pulse, you may choose either the "carotid" pulse or the "radial" pulse.

To use the radial pulse:

1. Place palm up.
2. Use index and middle fingers.
3. Locate the long bone on the thumb side.
4. Slide index and middle finger into groove pressing lightly.
5. Count the number of beats. They correspond to the beats of the heart.

To use the carotid pulse:

1. Place fingertips gently on one side of your neck below the jawbone and halfway between your neck muscles and windpipe.
2. Count the number of beats. They correspond exactly to the beats of the heart. Do not count pulse in both sides of the neck at once because you may cut off the circulation.

**For either pulse: count your heart beat for 15 seconds, then multiply the number by 4; this gives you the pulse for one minute. **

Ratings of perceived dyspnea (RPD)

The RPD scale is a self-assessment scale used by you to determine how short of breath you are when exercising or being active. This scale can be used with any activity and can help you determine if you should rest or continue with that activity.

During your program, you will be shown the RPD scale to assess how short of breath you are with each exercise. Your goal is to use this scale to help you understand when you should continue, do more or stop and rest during exercise or activities.

Ratings of Perceived Dyspnea Scale

0-nothing at all

0.5-very, very slight

1-very slight

2-slight

3-moderate

4-somewhat severe

5-severe

6

7-very severe

8

9

10-very, very severe