

Respiratory Therapy: Your Plan for Better Breathing

What is respiratory therapy?

Respiratory [RESS-per-uh-tawr-ee] **therapy** is medical care for breathing and the lungs. Your respiratory therapists can help you with:

- Breathing techniques to help you breathe easier or move mucus from your lungs
- Oxygen therapy to make sure your body gets the oxygen it needs to work properly
- Inhaled medicines to treat disease or ease symptoms
- Airway monitoring and management to make sure you're breathing well
- Pulmonary function tests to measure your lung volume and ability to move air in and out
- Collecting blood or sputum samples to diagnose or monitor a lung problem
- Bronchoscopy to help your doctor see into your lungs or get a tissue sample
- Education about your lung problems and how to manage it according to your doctor's orders

Why do I need respiratory therapy?

Your doctor may recommend respiratory therapy for any of these conditions:

- Asthma
- Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD)
- Cystic fibrosis
- Trauma or accidents
- Smoke inhalation
- Illness

You may also need respiratory care after a surgery or procedure, or during a lung test to assess your condition.



Respiratory therapists help people who are sick or recovering from surgery, or have a long-term lung disease such as asthma, bronchitis, emphysema, or cystic fibrosis.

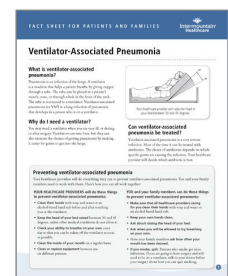
What is a respiratory therapist?

A **respiratory therapist** is a medical provider who is specially trained to help with lung problems. At Intermountain facilities, **respiratory therapists wear dark-green-colored scrub uniforms.**

Respiratory therapists work in all areas of a hospital. They also provide services at specialty sleep labs, as part of medical homecare visits, and in outpatient facilities.

Your respiratory therapist will follow the plan of care outlined by your doctor. Your plan may include therapy, tests, and education. The back of this handout outlines your respiratory therapy plan of care. Go over it with your therapist and be sure to ask any questions you may have.

If you have a ventilator, see the Intermountain fact sheet, **Ventilator-Associated Pneumonia (VAP)**. This handout explains what your respiratory care team will do to help prevent VAP.



My Plan for respiratory therapy

The following are recommended or scheduled as part of your plan of care.

Breathing techniques: _____

Device(s) for delivering inhaled medicines:

- Nebulizer
- Metered dose inhaler (MDI)
- Dry powder inhaler (DPI)
- Diskus inhaler
- Autohaler
- Other: _____

Medicines:

Your **quick-relief** or “**rescue**”
medicine (bronchodilator):

- Albuterol (Proventil, Ventolin, Duoneb)
- Atrovent
- Combivent
- Other: _____

Your **daily controller** or **maintenance**
medicine (corticosteroid or
anti-inflammatory)

- Advair
- Flovent
- Spiriva
- Asmanex
- Pulmicort
- Symbicort
- Other: _____

Oxygen therapy

Airway and/or ventilator monitoring and management (care for ventilators, tracheostomy tubes, airway tubes, and other artificial airways)

Other therapies: _____

Tests:

- Pulmonary function tests
- Collection of blood or sputum samples
- Bronchoscopy
- Sleep apnea testing

Education and home rehab services:

- Tobacco cessation education and support
- Asthma education
- COPD education
- Sleep apnea education
- Medicine and breathing device training
- Respiratory care discharge plan
- Pulmonary rehabilitation services
- Advance care planning discussions



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