

LUNG PROBLEMS AND CYSTIC FIBROSIS



You and your child or youth know their usual cystic fibrosis (CF) symptoms how to treat them. This fact sheet will help you to decide what to do and who to call when you're worried about unusual symptoms, like a cold, sore throat or earache.

When can I help my child at home?

If your child has symptoms of a cold (stuffy or runny nose, cough, and sometimes fever) you should:

- Do chest physiotherapy at least twice a day. Your child may need physiotherapy up to four times per day if they are very congested or coughing a lot.
- Start antibiotics available to you at home, usually Keflex® (cephalexin).
- Give Ventolin® up to 4-6 times each day if you have it and it seems to help your child's cough, wheezing or troubled breathing.

Contact your family doctor, CHEO's CF clinic or the on-call CF doctor if your child is working hard to breathe, even with these extra treatments

When should I call my family doctor or pediatrician?

Call your family doctor or pediatrician if your child or youth:

- has an earache
- has a sore throat
- has a cold or fever and you are worried

Make sure you tell your doctor about all the medications your child or youth is already taking.

When should I call CHEO's CF clinic?

Call the CF clinic if your child or youth has these symptoms for three days and they aren't getting better:

- increased cough

Signs your child is working hard to breathe:

- their breathing is much faster than usual
- the skin in between their ribs is getting sucked in with each breath
- the skin just above their collar bones or at the base of their neck is getting sucked in with each breath
- they are getting tired because breathing is such an effort
- they have trouble walking or talking
- they find it hard to catch their breath



- changes in mucous (more than usual, thicker than usual, changes colour from white or yellow to dark yellow or green)
- no appetite, weight loss

The CF clinic is open Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays, 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. You can reach the clinic by calling 613-737-7600, ext. 2214

When should I call CHEO's CF doctor on-call?

You should contact the CF on-call doctor if your child:

- has mild to moderate difficulty breathing (mild "pulling in" between their ribs or at the base of their neck)
- has severe cough (non-stop coughing, which can lead to red or purple face or vomiting)
- coughs up mucous with a few streaks (less than a teaspoon) of bright red or brownish, clotted blood
- has wheezing not controlled by giving Ventolin® every four hours

The CF doctor on-call is available from 8:00 a.m. to 11:00 p.m. every day. After these hours, go directly to the Emergency Department.

To reach the on-call CF doctor:

1. Call 613-737-7600
2. Press "0" for the operator
3. Ask the operator to page the CF doctor on-call.
4. Leave your name and phone number with the operator.



You should always call the CF clinic first, if the clinic is open.

When should I go to the Emergency Department?

You should visit the Emergency Department if your child or youth:

- has bluish lips, fingernails or skin
- is working hard to breathe (or is having mild to moderate difficulty breathing)
- is tired from working so hard to breathe
- has severe wheezing
- has severe chest tightness
- coughs up mucous with more than a few streaks of blood (it may be bright red or brownish, clotted blood)

When should I call 911?

Call an ambulance to bring your child to the nearest Emergency Department if your child or youth:

- is very tired or has trouble waking up because they have been working very hard to breathe
- turns blue
- coughs up more than a few tablespoons of red blood