

What is an assisted cough?

Coughing helps bring secretions (mucous) up from the lungs. An assisted cough is a way to help your child cough. This will help your child's lungs stay clear.

Why is it needed?

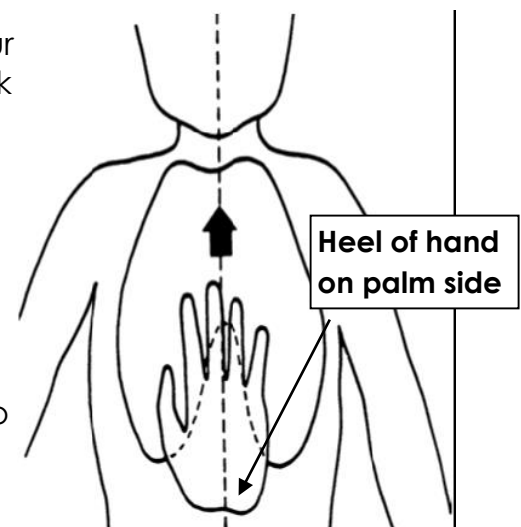
Some children have weak stomach muscles. When the stomach muscles are weak, your child is not able to cough well.

How do you do it?

If your child is in a wheelchair be sure the wheelchair is stable. Brace the wheelchair against a wall. Lock the wheels. If the wheelchair reclines, it may be easier to do the assisted cough when your child is laying back a bit.

1. If you are right-handed, put the heel of your right hand half way between the belly button and the lower end of the breastbone. If you are left-handed, put the heel of your left hand in the same place.
2. Ask your child to take 3 deep breaths while you have your hand in place. When your child takes the third breath, ask your child to cough. The cough should be done while your child lets the breath out. Help your child cough by using your hand to push in and up during the cough. Do not push into the lower end of the breastbone.
3. Repeat Step #1 and #2 as needed.

Gently push in and up from belly button toward the throat.



Special directions

If you have small hands, you may need to use both hands to do the push. When you use both hands, it can be hard to be sure both hands push at the same time. Practice helps you become good at doing an assisted cough. Use a pillow to practice the push.

How often should it be done?

Assisted cough should be done every morning and for every treatment. You will know if your child needs to do more assisted coughs if:

- You hear or feel a rattling sound in your child's chest when breathing in or out.
- Your child coughs and no mucous comes out.
- Your child tells you they need to cough.

How will assisted coughing feel to my child?

The assisted cough feels like a hard push on the stomach. The push is quick yet gentle.

ALERT: Call your child's doctor, nurse, or clinic if you have any questions or concerns or if your child:

- Is not able to cough up mucous or secretions.
- Seems bluish or gray in color.
- Has pain in the lower belly (abdomen) area.
- Has chest injury or broken ribs.
- Is pregnant.
- Has special health care needs that were not covered by this information.

This sheet was created to help you care for your child or family member. It does not take the place of medical care. Talk with your healthcare provider for diagnosis, treatment and follow-up.