Exercise Therapy for Patients with Pneumonia or COPD

The therapists at Aurora Rehabilitation Center are proud to be part of the team caring for you. Our care is based on the principles of ACE (Acute Care for the Elderly). This means our goals are to help you become independent in self-care and mobility, ensure your safety, and meet your psychological/social needs. Using the ACE concepts, we can help you function better and reduce the time you need to spend in the hospital.

Why therapy is important for you
Regular exercise is a very important part of helping yourself feel better and improve your mood. Muscles that are out of shape make activities harder. The body has to work harder to meet its needs, which can lead to shortness of breath. Exercise helps tone muscles so they use less oxygen. The key is to build your strength and endurance slowly and safely, doing activities you enjoy.

The benefits of exercise
You may be afraid that exercising will make you short of breath. In fact, not exercising will make you more short of breath. When you are not active, your muscles lose strength and weak muscles use more oxygen. Exercise will:
• Strengthen your muscles so they need less oxygen and you don’t become short of breath as fast
• Improve your appetite
• Help you sleep better
• Help reduce your stress

Choosing activities
Choose things that you enjoy. Exercise can include activities such as stationary cycling, walking, swimming, bicycling or treadmill exercise. Working with light hand weights can build upper body strength.

Getting started
Start slowly. Warm up your muscles by gently stretching and bending, or by walking slowly. Then begin to exercise using pursed-lip breathing to help control shortness of breath.

Increasing your endurance
• Make exercise a regular part of your routine.
• To increase your endurance, add one minute each week to your exercise time.
• When you are able to exercise comfortably for 20-30 minutes, increase your speed or the number of times you perform the exercise.
• On days that you don’t feel as well, break your exercise into several shorter periods.

• Stop if you:
  – Feel dizzy
  – Have chest discomfort
  – Have heart palpitations
  – Have shortness of breath

Your occupational and physical therapists can help you design an exercise program to meet your specific needs.

If you have questions, please call the Rehabilitation Department at _________________________________

The information presented is intended for general information and educational purposes. It is not intended to replace the advice of your health care provider. Contact your health care provider if you believe you have a health problem. Aurora Health Care is a not-for-profit health care provider and a national leader in efforts to improve the quality of health care.