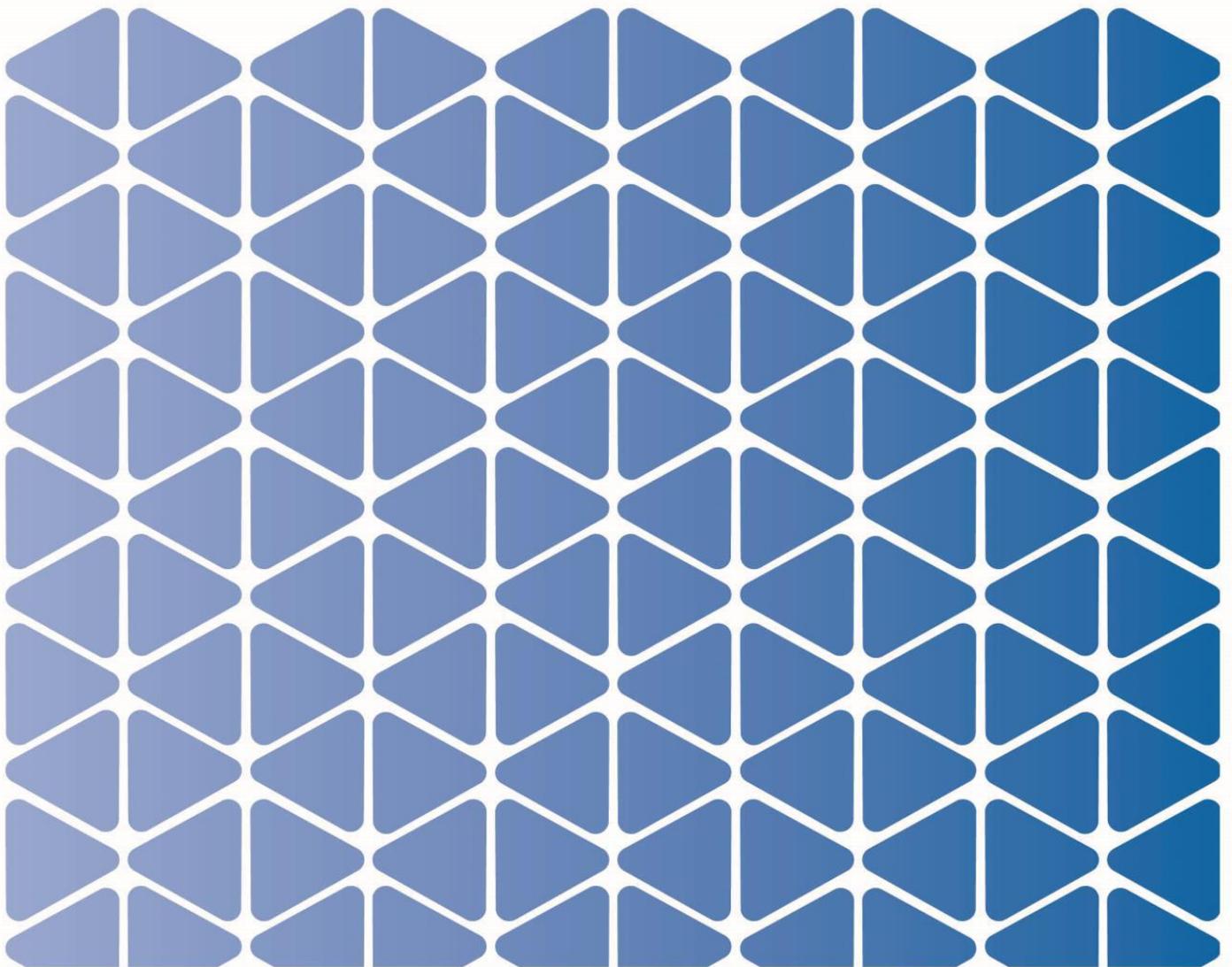




PATIENT INFORMATION

ABDOMINAL BREATHING PRACTICE



Abdominal Breathing Practice

- 1) Practise gently pulling your abdominal muscles in towards your spine – rest your hands on your stomach, one above the other as you do this, to monitor the movement (make sure you do not pull with your hands though). Feel that you can contract and relax your abdominal muscles at will. Ensure your chest and shoulders remain relaxed and lowered throughout.
- 2) Then, as you pull your stomach in, squeeze out your breath in a strong ‘shhhhh’ sound. You can also try ‘sssss’ and ‘ffffff’. **Check that your face, neck and shoulders are relaxed and quite still as you do this** – shoulders and chest lowered (imagine keeping your breastbone parallel with your spine), jaw/cheeks relaxed. Most of the movement should be in your stomach/abdomen.
- 3) Once you have established this pattern, shift your focus to the in-breath. Say your long ‘shhhh’, squeezing your abdomen gradually towards your spine until you feel you are running out of breath, then let go of your abdominal muscles and breathe in as you allow your stomach to expand. The air should rush in, with little effort. Keep checking face and neck remain relaxed, shoulders and chest lowered.
- 4) Repeat this pattern – long, slow ‘shhhh’ as you squeeze your abdomen (imagine yourself as a balloon with a slow puncture), then release abdominal muscles and let the air rush into your lungs.
- 5) Now change to a long ‘sssss’ sound. Take a good breath in, imagining the air filling up from low in your abdomen, letting your stomach expand. Breathe out on ‘ssss’. Use a timer to time yourself and record how long you can sustain the sound for. Aim to go a little longer each time by controlling the air flow using the slow, steady squeeze of your abdomen. Goal: 20 seconds or more. Keep checking that you are not holding excess tension in your face, neck, shoulders or chest.
- 6) You can also try with a long, sustained ‘zzzzz’ – keep the pitch comfortable, try to keep the sound unbroken, so no roughness. See if you can manage the same length of time on this as your longest sustained ‘sssss’ (so if you can do 20s on ‘sss’, try to match that on ‘zzz’)
- 7) Try the same abdominal breathing pattern without any sound. This should be easy, relaxed breathing through your mouth/nose, just quietly monitoring that your abdomen is expanding as you breathe in and contracting as you breathe out.
- 8) Practise this breathing pattern while lying down, sitting, standing, walking around, etc. – try to let it become your new normal pattern.

If you have any queries or difficulties with these exercises please contact your speech and language therapist on 01905 760475.

If your symptoms or condition worsens, or if you are concerned about anything, please call your GP, 111, or 999.

Patient Experience

We know that being admitted to hospital can be a difficult and unsettling time for you and your loved ones. If you have any questions or concerns, please do speak with a member of staff on the ward or in the relevant department who will do their best to answer your questions and reassure you.

Feedback

Feedback is really important and useful to us – it can tell us where we are working well and where improvements can be made. There are lots of ways you can share your experience with us including completing our Friends and Family Test – cards are available and can be posted on all wards, departments and clinics at our hospitals. We value your comments and feedback and thank you for taking the time to share this with us.

Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

If you have any concerns or questions about your care, we advise you to talk with the nurse in charge or the department manager in the first instance as they are best placed to answer any questions or resolve concerns quickly. If the relevant member of staff is unable to help resolve your concern, you can contact the PALS Team. We offer informal help, advice or support about any aspect of hospital services & experiences.

Our PALS team will liaise with the various departments in our hospitals on your behalf, if you feel unable to do so, to resolve your problems and where appropriate refer to outside help.

If you are still unhappy you can contact the Complaints Department, who can investigate your concerns. You can make a complaint orally, electronically or in writing and we can advise and guide you through the complaints procedure.

How to contact PALS:

Telephone Patient Services: 0300 123 1732 or via email at: wah-tr.PET@nhs.net

Opening times:

The PALS telephone lines are open Monday to Thursday from 8.30am to 4.30pm and Friday: 8.30am to 4.00pm. Please be aware that a voicemail service is in use at busy times, but messages will be returned as quickly as possible.

If you are unable to understand this leaflet, please communicate with a member of staff.