

Managing Cystic Fibrosis: Order for Respiratory Therapies

The purpose of this handout is to review the order in which you should take your inhaled medications for airway clearance.

1. Open the airways with a bronchodilator

(Albuterol or Xopenex)

Bronchodilators relax the smooth muscle of the airways. This opens them up and allows for better airflow and easier airway clearance.

2. Hydrate the airways with an osmotic agent

(3% or 7% Hypertonic Saline)

Inhaling a hypertonic saline helps hydrate the thick mucus making it easier to move out of the airways.

3. Thin the mucus with a mucolytic

(Pulmozyme)

This medication thins the thick, sticky mucus in the lungs. When mucus is less thick and sticky, it is easier to loosen, move, and cough or huff out.

4. Clear the mucus with airway clearance

(Manual Chest PT, Vest, Acapella and huff coughing)

Airway clearance devices will help clear the mucus out of your small airways and into larger airways so that you can remove it. You may use your vest while nebulizing hypertonic saline and Pulmozyme.

5. Kill the bacteria with an inhaled antibiotic

(for example TOBI, Colistin, or Cayston)

After airway clearance has cleared your lungs of loosened mucus, use the inhaled antibiotic to help kill the bacteria in the lungs.

**6. Reduce the swelling with an anti-inflammatory agent
(for example Flovent, Advair, or Symbicort)**

CF airways can become inflamed (swollen) from all of the mucus and infection. This medication will help reduce the swelling. It is best to take this last and remember to rinse your mouth after use.

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