

# **Respiratory Care Services**

## **John Dempsey Hospital**

### **Policy and Procedure Manual**

**Subject:** Percussion

**Rationale:** Percussion is a technique of rhythmically tapping the chest wall with cupped hands. It is designed to loosen secretions in the area underlying the percussion by the air pressure that is generated by the cupped hand on the chest wall. It is performed during inspiration and expiration.

**Equipment:** Manual percussion (hands) or  
Mechanical percussion (pneumatic percussor)

**Indications:**

1. Excessive accumulation of secretions, as seen in many acute or chronic pulmonary diseases.
2. Retained secretions caused by dehydration and pulmonary disease.
3. Prophylactic care of preoperative patient with history of pulmonary problems or potential postoperative pulmonary problems.

**Procedure:**

1. Locate the patient's chart and review it with special attention to:
  - a. the history of the patient's illness, the findings on physical examination, laboratory results, x-ray findings and the patient's working diagnosis.
  - b. the doctor's orders must be read before the patient assessment to see if changes have been made.
2. Explain to the patient that his doctor has ordered chest physical therapy, what the objectives are and what the patient needs to do to receive the treatment.
3. Wash hands thoroughly in the patient's presence.
4. If bronchodilator therapy is indicated, provide it prior to the chest physical therapy.
5. After the therapy has been administered, wash hands in the patient's presence.
6. Chart the treatment and any observations on the patient record.
7. Record treatment on treatment assignment sheet.

**Precautions:**

1. Cancer with known metastatic changes
2. Emphysema
3. Small, limited open wound areas, skin grafts, or burns
4. Orthopedic procedures
5. Pulmonary embolus (Treated)
6. Tuberculosis (Patient with either active TB or suspected cases of TB must be on respiratory isolation)

**Contraindications:**

1. Acute spinal cord injuries
2. Anticoagulant therapy Petechiae
3. Chest tubes
4. Empyema
5. Flail chest
6. Frank hemoptysis
7. Limited patient tolerance
8. Osteoporotic changes
9. Petechiae
10. Pulmonary embolus (Suspected, Untreated)
11. Thoracic surgery
12. Untreated tension pneumothorax
13. Unstable cardiac status
14. Wounds, skin grafts, burns (extensive )

Issued: 4/25/94

Revised: 11/05