

The Pulmonary Rehabilitation Programme

Due to start in August 2007, these classes are for patients who have been diagnosed with moderate chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD). Patients will initially be referred by their GP or practice nurse if they are deemed suitable. This programme is a great opportunity for patients to learn how to get back in control of their breathing. It will make patients feel fitter and be more able to do normal day-to-day activities such as housework, shopping, getting up stairs or gardening.

What is the programme?

Pulmonary rehabilitation is a twice weekly programme which runs for 6 weeks. It is designed to ease patients breathing problems by increasing muscle strength, fitness, quality of life, confidence and knowledge of COPD.

Each session (lasting approximately 1½ hours) is supervised by a health professional and consists of an exercise programme done as part of a group, and a talk/discussion. The talks cover many aspects of living with COPD, such as how the lungs work, how to manage shortness of breath, and what is COPD. We also look at medication and diet.

Who can take part?

Everyone on the programme has COPD but will be exercising at different levels, so it is important that patients do not try to keep up with anyone else but exercise at the pace advised by the physiotherapist.

To gain maximum benefit it is important that patients attend as many of the sessions as possible and also exercise at home. Patients will be shown what exercises to do, how to do them and also how often they should be carried out. The exercises are gentle at first and increase as the patient starts to feel fitter.

Preparation for the programme.

Before the programme starts patients are asked to attend for an assessment. This will take approximately one hour. Patients will be asked to complete a short questionnaire designed to assess how much their lung problems are affecting their lives, and also carry out a simple walking test. Patient's lung function will also be measured. These tests allow us to plan how much exercise each patient should do in the group and also at home.