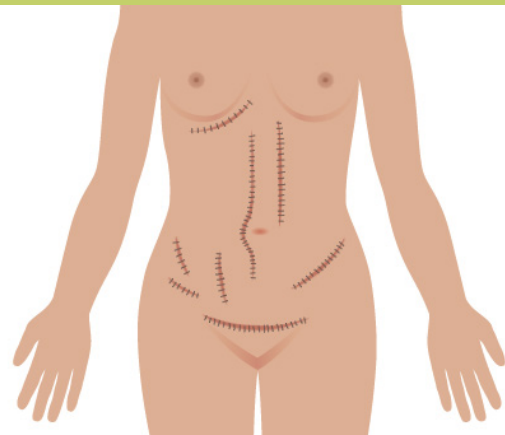


# POSTOPERATIVE CARE: SPLINTING FOR COUGH



## When is respiratory splinting performed?

- Splinting is helpful when a client has a chest or abdominal incision.
- Splinting involves supporting the surgical incision and surrounding tissues with a pillow while coughing.
- When a client coughs, the muscles, tissue, and ligaments that were manipulated during surgery can cause additional pain when engaged.
- The goal of splinting is to reduce pain while encouraging lung expansion.



## Supplies



Pillow or rolled blanket

## Pre-procedure

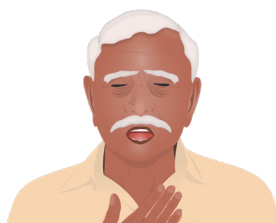
- Assist client to semi-Fowler's or sitting position.
- Explain the procedure and purpose for completing.
- Provide anticipatory guidance. Acknowledge that coughing may feel painful, but is necessary, and that splinting will help to decrease pain.

## Procedure

1. Give a pillow or rolled blanket to the client to “hug” against their chest wall and/or abdomen.
2. Instruct the client to hug the pillow tightly and take a slow deep breath. At maximum inspiration, client should be instructed to cough strongly multiple times.
3. Encourage the client to continue splinting and coughing regularly, based on your assessment and the provider's order.



Having the client cough multiple times is more effective at clearing respiratory secretions than a single cough.



Strong coughs and deep breathing are important postoperatively to ensure effective ventilation and help prevent infection.

## NOTES

