

Did you know that taking a deep breath is exercise for your lungs?

So here I am with my son, Daniel, who is 16 yrs old, at Trillium Mississauga Hospital... yes a familiar spot where I was treated for my heart attack. But this time I'm here for my son Daniel who had experienced pains in his upper back and chest. Then he had trouble taking a deep breath and was complaining of pain in his breathing. X-ray at Trillium confirmed the diagnosis Spontaneous Pneumothorax - a collapsed lung! How could this happen to my little boy who is 6 feet tall! ...Apparently this is a common diagnosis in tall lean male teenagers.

So Daniel was put under and a tube was inserted in to allow the air to release from his chest cavity and then he was sent home. Then 2 days later chest x-rays were taken again but the lung partially re inflated to close but did not reach to 100%. Thoracic Specialist examined Daniel and surgery was ordered asap since it hadn't healed and it wouldn't heal with the inserted tube.

Apparently this surgeon does this type of surgery once a week in tall lean male teenagers. What an awful thought!

So Daniel was admitted right away and had surgery. He came out of surgery in extreme pain and discomfort. Daniel was all hooked up with tubes draining blood fluid from his chest cavity.

For a mother watching her son laying in a hospital bed all hooked up was painful and disturbing. The day after surgery Daniel was reassessed by the Thoracic Specialist. The next chest x-ray still showed air escaping from the chest cavity so the lungs were still not filling up to capacity. The Specialist wanted Daniel to be able to deep breathe and cough and of course be more mobile. So Daniel's homework from the Thoracic Specialist was to exercise his lungs by deep breathing. Specifically he had to learn how to inhale through the nose and exhale through the mouth deeply. He needed to teach his lungs how to capture oxygen and how to expel it in order to get the tube removed from his chest cavity and be able to go home.

How ironic I'm his mom, a personal trainer and fitness instructor who teaches clients daily how to engage their lungs to breathe through their exercises. This was my specialty and now I'm sharing this learning with my son who needs it himself in order to heal from the surgery! When I'm training my clients how to breath it takes time and effort to get the brain working with your breath. When you train your lungs to breath out through exercise exertion it actually makes the exercise so much easier.

The other thing we tried was Daniel teaching me how to play Wii - but we had to stop that shortly after starting to play. The deep breathing was hurting too much as he laughed at me waving the game control around like a mad woman.

Daniel is now on the road to recovery as he continues to practice how to use his lungs to full capacity. So what are you waiting for to push you to exercise your lungs and keep them healthy and strong? If you need help at learning how to use your lungs more efficiently and how to get through cardiovascular activity without huffing and puffing then please give me a call. It's time to do your homework for your lungs, so YOU can breathe easier too!

~ Nadia Bender,

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