

SCI PHYSICIAN RESOURCES- RESPIRATORY

Respiratory complications are a leading cause of death post SCI

BASICS

- Lesions above C3 require full ventilatory support
- Lesions between C3-5 will have respiratory muscle dysfunction
- Cough (secretion clearance) often impaired (abdo muscles T4-L1)
- Decreased lung capacity/volume usual

OBSTRUCTIVE SLEEP APNEA

- More common in SCI
- Monitor weight, snoring, apnea, excessive sleepiness
- Testing via overnight oximetry or polysomnography

WHAT TO DO

Lung function testing yearly (Spirometry/PFT)

Exercise has been shown to increase lung capacity

Quit smoking

Immunization (> T8): pneumococcal at time of injury and 65 yo  
annual flu

Enquire about infections