



| RYGG MÄRGS | SKADA

<http://www.ryggmargsskada.se>

The following text is a selection from the website.

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<http://www.rgintegration.se/en/>

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Respiratory function with spinal cord injury

After a spinal cord injury, respiratory function is affected to a different extent depending on where and to what extent the spinal cord is damaged. The risk of respiratory problems is greatest in people with tetraplegia and people who need a tracheotomy. There is much you can do yourself to maintain a good lung function. A major cause of respiratory problems is reduced ability to cough, so it is important to have alternative strategies that help keep the respiratory system free from secretions. It is also important to pay attention to signals of incipient respiratory infection and contact your healthcare provider early on in order to avoid problems, e.g. pneumonia. Remember that respiration function changes with increasing age, and obesity significantly increases the risk of problems.

THIS IS HOW YOU CAN COUNTERACT BREATHING PROBLEMS

- Avoid large amounts of mucus from accumulating in the lungs by having well-functioning alternative coughing techniques.
- Try to avoid lying in bed for long periods of time.
- Avoid people who have colds
- Stop smoking
- Make sure that you have a healthy weight.
- Consider vaccination against influenza and pneumonia.
- Be alert to signs of sleep apnoea and/or underventilation, such as snoring, restless sleep, morning headache, daytime fatigue, and swelling of hands and feet.
- If you have signs of respiratory infection, such as coughing, fever, sore throat, or difficulty breathing, contact your healthcare provider promptly.
- Ensure that your seating position is optimal from a respiratory point of view. Sometimes, using a so-called abdominal girdle on people with a cervical spine injury can improve the respiratory volume.