

# Therapy after pectus surgery

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Your child had surgery to repair either a pectus excavatum or pectus carinatum. It is important for your child to:

- Increase muscle strength.
- Move well and be flexible.

You can help your child do this by making sure they do their exercises and stretches.

## What exercises and stretches can my child do to get stronger after surgery?

Your child's physical therapist (PT) will teach you and your child a home exercise program that is best for your child.

Below is a list of exercises and stretches the PT may ask your child to do. Most often, they need to be done 2 times each day.

1. Have your child lie on his back in bed or on a firm surface.
  - Start with their arms beside their hips with palms facing up.
  - Have them slide their arms up the bed moving towards their shoulders with their thumbs leading.
  - Each day, have your child slowly increase how high they raise their arms. Have them keep doing this until they feel a comfortable stretch.
  - This exercise should look like they are making a snow angel in bed.
2. Have your child stand and face a wall with their feet about 8 to 10 inches away.
  - Have them walk their right fingers up the wall towards the ceiling. Repeat 5 times.
  - Have them walk their left fingers up the wall towards the ceiling. Repeat 5 times.
  - Each day, have your child slowly increase how high they raise their arms.

## What safety measures should my child follow after surgery?

Your child's doctor will talk with you about specific care for your child. Some general safety measures your child's doctor and therapists advise are listed below.

### Your child SHOULD:

- Return to school when they are physically able.
- Get permission from your child's teachers to leave class early. This helps to protect your child from bumping into classmates.
- Stand up straight without slouching or slumping.
- Limit physical activity for 4 weeks.

**In case of an urgent concern or emergency, call 911 or go to the nearest emergency department right away.**

# Therapy after pectus surgery, continued

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## Your child should NOT:

- Play any contact sports where they could bump into others (like wrestling) or get hit with a ball (like football or basketball) for at least 3 months.
- Lift heavy objects over 5 pounds, including book bags. If possible, have 2 sets of books and book bags – one for home and one for school.
- Bend or twist at the waist. Instead, they should bend at the knees to safely pick up objects.
- Sleep on their side for up to 4 weeks.

Your child's doctor will let you know when your child may go back to their normal activities.

If you have any questions about your child's exercise program, please call the Rehabilitation (Rehab) department at Children's Healthcare of Atlanta at this phone number:

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Therapist	Date	Time
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Phone number

**This teaching sheet contains general information only. Talk with your child's doctor or a member of your child's healthcare team about specific care of your child.**

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