

Diseases of the Respiratory System

GENERAL TERMINOLOGY

Dyspnea—difficult, labored breathing.

Apnea—absence of breathing.

DISORDERS

Bronchitis—inflammation (acute or chronic) of the mucous membranes in the bronchial tubes of the lung.

Causes: infection; inhalation of a chemical irritant (e.g., tobacco smoke, dust, car exhaust).

Contraindications/indications: can be contagious so obtain the advice and approval of client's doctor before performing bodywork; massage can reduce thoracic muscular spasms; avoid massage if client has a fever.

Emphysema—destruction and enlargement of the alveoli in the lung; causes labored breathing and air trapping in the lung, leading to "barrel chest" (rounded chest) and weight loss.

Cause: cigarette smoking.

Contraindications/indications: massage can relax muscles involved in breathing and therefore reduce anxiety; consult with client's doctor.

Pneumothorax—accumulation of air in the pleural space (i.e., the space between the lung and rib cage); results in partial or complete collapse of the lung; commonly accompanied by a hemothorax (blood in the pleural space).

Causes: puncture into the thoracic cavity (e.g., knife wound); fractured or dislocated ribs.

Contraindications/indications: refer to doctor; massage is contraindicated.

Asthma—a disease characterized by episodes ("attacks") of muscle spasm or inflammation of the bronchi and bronchiole tubes.

Causes: allergic response to a particular allergen (e.g., pollen, dust, food, drug); emotional or physical stress or strenuous exercise.

Contraindications/indications: massage can be very effective in reducing stress; all bodywork should be gentle and relaxing.

Tuberculosis—an infectious disease that leads to the development of tubercles (i.e., small masses of bacteria and necrotic tissue surrounded by macrophages) in the alveoli of the lung.

Cause: *Mycobacterium tuberculosis* infection acquired by inhalation of the bacteria.

Contraindications/indications: consult with client's doctor.

← Diseases such as bronchitis and emphysema fall under the general category of chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD).

← In some cases of emphysema, the lung capacity is decreased to approximately 10% of normal. The dramatic decrease in the ability to maintain normal blood gas levels that accompanies severe emphysema results in immediate fatigue while performing simple activities, such as standing and walking across the room.

Coryza (common cold)—inflammation of the mucous membranes of the upper respiratory tract; signs and symptoms include excessive nasal secretions, tearing, sore throat, hoarse voice, and general malaise; usually lasts about 6 to 7 days.

Cause: viral infection of the upper respiratory tract; most commonly spread by touching the eyes and nose with fingers that have come into contact with an infected surface.

Contraindications/indications: avoid direct contact with the client (contagious condition); allow symptoms to clear before performing bodywork.

Pneumonia—inflammation of the bronchioles and alveoli of the lungs.

Causes: bacterial or fungal infection; inhalation of irritating fumes or particles.

Contraindications/indications: consult with client's doctor; massage during acute stages is contraindicated; massage is beneficial for respiratory muscles and shoulders during the postacute stage; client's doctor may advise tapotement to promote expectoration.

Pleurisy (pleuritis)—inflammation of the pleura (i.e., the membrane lining the thoracic cavity); a painful condition made worse by inspiration.

Causes: viral infection; tuberculosis; cancer.

Contraindications/indications: refer to doctor; medical care should precede any bodywork.

Cystic fibrosis—an inherited multisystem disease of the exocrine glands; results in the production of excessive, thick mucus that obstructs the gastrointestinal, respiratory, and urinary systems.

Cause: genetic (1 in 20 Caucasians carry the cystic fibrosis trait).

Contraindications/indications: avoid the area of the pancreas if inflamed; obtain approval of client's doctor before performing bodywork; tapotement to the chest, light exercise, and bronchodilators increase drainage of the bronchioles.