

Specialty Areas in Respiratory Therapy

Specialty	Place of Work	Kind of Work	Types of Patients
<i>Adult Critical Care</i>	<i>Hospital Intensive Care Units; Emergency Departments; Transport Teams.</i>	<i>Initiate and manage mechanical ventilation; draw, analyze and interpret blood gases; perform and interpret invasive heart and circulatory system monitoring; assess chest X-rays and lab data; administer inhaled drugs; insert artificial airways in emergencies (intubation); assist in all code blues; work in a team with physicians and nurses; make treatment decisions based on diagnostic and physical exam data; communicate with patients and families.</i>	<i>Trauma victims; patients with severe respiratory and cardiac disease; patients recovering from major surgeries; patients with paralytic diseases.</i>
<i>Newborn Critical Care</i>	<i>Hospital Newborn Intensive Care Units; Labor and Delivery Rooms; Transport Teams.</i>	<i>Work is similar to adult critical care except involves newborn babies, often premature and weighing as little as one pound. Work in labor and delivery includes initial assessment and resuscitation of high-risk births.</i>	<i>High-risk newborns suffering from respiratory distress syndrome or congenital birth defects.</i>
<i>Pulmonary Function Testing</i>	<i>Hospital or Outpatient Clinic Pulmonary Function Laboratory; Patient Bedside.</i>	<i>Perform a wide variety of diagnostic lung function tests using sophisticated computerized equipment; involves obtaining a brief medical history from the patient, giving precise understandable instructions, and gaining maximum patient cooperation.</i>	<i>People of all ages suffering from asthma; people with smoking related illnesses such as emphysema and chronic bronchitis; people with occupational- environmental exposure to air pollution.</i>
<i>Pulmonary Rehabilitation</i>	<i>Outpatient Clinics.</i>	<i>Patient and family education about the disease process, drug actions, drug self-administration, self-monitoring, and use of home oxygen. Designing and implementing exercise programs to improve activity tolerance, decrease breathlessness, and improve life quality; involves individualized physiological assessment and exercise testing for appropriate exercise prescription.</i>	<i>Patients with advanced Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) and other chronic lung diseases.</i>
<i>Home Care</i>	<i>Patient Homes.</i>	<i>Part of hospital discharge planning team to ensure ongoing respiratory needs are met in the home. Patient and family education about the disease process, drug actions, self-treatment, self-monitoring, equipment use and maintenance (e.g. oxygen, aerosol, breathing assist and monitoring devices). Involves patient interviewing and ongoing physical assessment in the home. Work closely with family physician. Focus is on disease management and prevention of re-hospitalization.</i>	<i>Infants to adults with ongoing heart and lung illnesses: includes premature babies, patients with cystic fibrosis, COPD, sleep apnea, neurological conditions, congestive heart failure, etc.</i>
<i>Sleep-Related Breathing Disorders</i>	<i>Sleep Laboratories.</i>	<i>Monitoring various aspects of heart and lung function during sleep, such as blood oxygen levels, heart rate, blood pressure, breathing patterns, length of apneic (no-breathing) periods, muscular effort, and brain waves.</i>	<i>People with extreme day-time sleepiness and sleep apnea.</i>
<i>Asthma Education/ Disease Management</i>	<i>Hospitals; Outpatient Clinics; Schools.</i>	<i>Patient, family, teacher education about asthma: the disease process, avoiding asthma triggers, recognizing warning signs; proper medication self-administration technique; role of various medications; emergency education.</i>	<i>People with asthma, often-healthy school-age youth and young adults.</i>