

Respiratory Therapist with Cystic Fibrosis Receives Her Own SmartVest®

Tracy C. was diagnosed with Cystic Fibrosis at age 2. She has vivid memories of frequent hospital stays and sinus surgeries since age 4. Tracy grew up in Louisiana and remembers her mother administering chest physical therapy (CPT or rapid chest percussion) every day before school. The purpose was to rid her lungs of fluid so she would not get sick. "We'd be in there pounding away, so nobody in the house got any sleep," she recalls.

Today, Tracy is 25 years old and has moved to Las Vegas, Nevada, with her husband, who is a pilot. As a Respiratory Therapist, Tracy trains others with respiratory conditions to use a SmartVest® to rid their lungs of excess secretions. It was not until the frequency of these trainings increased that she considered using a SmartVest® herself. "Every time I went out to do a training I thought, 'This is really cool. It works so well. I need to get this.'"



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Tracy C.

Tracy contacted her doctor and requested her own SmartVest® in April of 2008. She uses it two times per day for 30-minute sessions. Tracy said that when she first received the machine, "My expectations were that it would help me get

my secretions out so that my husband wouldn't have to pound on me (he took over administering CPT whenever he was home); I wanted to be able to take it with me because I fly a lot; and I wanted to be able to use the vest at the same time as my medications to decrease the total treatment time because I work 12-hour shifts." She said all of her expectations were met.

Tracy is convinced that the SmartVest® has decreased her hospital stays. "With all the time that I have, which is very little, and with my husband being gone a lot, I would have gone without any treatments," she says. "I was always feeling sick and tired, so I didn't have the energy to do it." Now, she gets up an hour early to do her SmartVest® treatment before work, and does it again when she gets home. "I sleep better, I'm exercising a lot more, and I'm not as susceptible to all the sickness I'm around every day working in respiratory therapy."

Tracy said she recommended the SmartVest® for her 5-year-old cousin, who also has Cystic Fibrosis, when she saw his mother administering CPT and heard him whining, "Do we have to do this?" Tracy said she immediately recalled saying the exact same thing at his age. Now they administer his medications and use the SmartVest® at the same time, which has shortened his treatments to about 30 minutes. "They love it," she said. "It takes away the burden from everybody else, it shortens the treatment time, and it gives you more energy. You just feel a whole lot better."