

Gasping for Air Activity

www.stepupnc.com

1. Provide each participant with a coffee straw
2. Explain they are going to participate in an activity that demonstrates how difficult it might be to breathe in certain situations.
3. Ask each participant to pinch their nostrils closed and place the straw in his/her mouth.
4. Have each participant breathe through the straw for one minute while someone else times them.
5. Ask students what it was like to breathe through the straw.
6. Explain that the long term effects of smoking cigarettes are very serious. Breathing through the coffee straw demonstrates what it is like to breathe when you have chronic obstructive lung disease. (like emphysema for example)

With **emphysema**, there is a limited airflow in and out of the lungs b/c of the smallest air passages to the lungs are destroyed by cigarette smoke.

It becomes difficult for the lungs to bring in oxygen and remove carbon dioxide. The heart must work hard to get oxygen to the cells.

