



**Banner Thunderbird**  
Medical Center

**Mike Clark, BA, RRT, is a registered respiratory therapist with Banner Thunderbird's Pulmonary Rehabilitation program.**

**What types of patients come to Banner Thunderbird's Pulmonary Rehabilitation program?**

Patients who come to pulmonary rehab generally have some type of chronic lung disease. Many of these patients have trouble performing their daily activities due to symptoms of a chronic lung disease. Even activities like vacuuming, making the bed, showering or bathing often become difficult. As activities become more difficult or impossible, de-conditioning of the muscles can occur due to lack of physical activity. Unfortunately, this downward spiral in health caused by chronic lung disease can be debilitating and adversely affect quality of life.

**In what ways can pulmonary rehab benefit patients?**

A complete pulmonary rehab program can teach patients how to control their lung disease instead of the disease controlling them. Through exercise and education quality of life can be improved. Daily activities often become easier. Some patients experience less shortness of breath, more stamina, less fatigue, even improved oxygenation. Additionally, patients network with other people who also suffer from lung disease.

**What will patients and their caregivers learn by participating in Banner Thunderbird's Pulmonary Rehab program?**

Patients learn that symptoms of chronic lung disease can sometimes be reversed by various methods taught in pulmonary rehab. BTMC Pulmonary Rehab offers education classes for patients and families about many aspects of lung disease like taking medications, nutrition, breathing properly, and bronchial hygiene.

**How long does the program last?**

We preach here that exercise is for life, but insurance often covers up to 20 visits of pulmonary rehab. BTMC Pulmonary Rehab offers a maintenance exercise/education program once insurance coverage is exhausted, the patient can continue exercising here and attending education for an out-of-pocket

charge. Many patients apply what they learn in pulmonary rehab and continue exercising on their own.

**What are some unique programs and/or services within Banner Thunderbird's Pulmonary Rehab program?**

In addition to exercise and education to help control the symptoms of lung disease, we offer harmonica therapy. The harmonica is an instrument that has proven to exercise the diaphragm as well as the other ventilatory muscles. A harmonica along with a tutorial is given to every BTMC Pulmonary Rehab patient. We even have a group of patients that practice and play harmonicas as a group. Playing in the group is optional, but any patient/family member is welcome. Group harmonica playing occurs in pulmonary rehab several times per month. This group of harmonica players (self named "breathless") often play in public for health-related and hospital functions. "Breathless" is not a performance based group, but our mission is to promote chronic lung disease awareness and the positive effects of pulmonary rehabilitation.

**Is pulmonary rehab covered by insurance?**

Yes, most insurances cover pulmonary rehabilitation.

**How would someone contact Banner Thunderbird's Pulmonary Rehabilitation program?**

Getting into pulmonary rehab starts at the physician's office because a doctor's order is necessary. For questions, the phone number at BTMC pulmonary rehabilitation is (602)865-4040.