



RESPIRATORY DISTRESS

Effective: April 27, 2017
Replaces: February 8, 2013
Review: April 27, 2022

1. BLS Treatment

- 1.1. Routine Medical Care – Adult **(700-S04)**
 - 1.1.1. **Oxygen** – titrate as appropriate
- 1.2. Place patient in a position that decreases work of breathing
- 1.3. If the airway cannot be secured or ventilated, transport to the closest hospital (Policy 602)

2. ALS Treatment

- 2.1. **Vascular Access (IV)**, TKO
- 2.2. Complete assessment of patient's lung sounds and treat accordingly
- 2.3. Prepare for intubation if patient condition worsens

3. Asthma (Wheezes)

- 3.1. **Albuterol 5mg** in 6ml normal saline via handheld nebulizer device, may repeat if respiratory distress continues
- 3.2. Consider the use of CPAP in conjunction with Albuterol if respiratory distress continues
- 3.3. If after all interventions the patient condition worsens and becomes critical, administer **Epinephrine (1:1,000) 0.3mg IM**, may repeat once if no change

4. Pneumonia (Rhonchi, Febrile)

- 4.1. Obtain and record temperature
 - 4.1.1. Consider Sepsis screening and treatment **(700-A04)**
- 4.2. Consider **Albuterol 5mg** in 6ml normal saline via handheld nebulizer device if wheezes are present
- 4.3. Consider the use of CPAP if respiratory distress continues

5. Pulmonary Edema (Rales)

- 5.1. Apply approved CPAP device **(700-M12)**
- 5.2. Complete 12 Lead EKG, if STEMI is present, go to **(700-A08)**
- 5.3. If patient's systolic blood pressure is less than 90mmHg, go to **(700-A10)**
- 5.4. **Nitroglycerin 0.8mg SL**, every 5 minutes, max of 3 (0.8mg) doses
 - 5.4.1. Discontinue if systolic blood pressure is less than 100 mmHg
- 5.5. Apply **Nitro-paste one (1) inch**, topically to the chest, may be given in conjunction with sublingual nitroglycerin, discontinue if systolic blood pressure is less than 100mmHg

6. Chronic Obstructed Pulmonary Disease (COPD)

- 6.1. Do not withhold high flow oxygen to patients with COPD exacerbations, titrate the amount down as the respiratory distress decreases
- 6.2. **Albuterol 5mg** in 6ml normal saline via handheld nebulizer device, may repeat if respiratory distress continues