



Acute Respiratory Distress

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Continuous Positive Airway Pressure (CPAP)

• Indications:

- CHF with pulmonary edema
- Moderate to severe resp. distress
- Near drowning

• Contraindications:

- < 8 years of age
- Respiratory or cardiac arrest
- Severe decreased LOC
- Agonal respirations
- Inability to maintain airway
- Suspected pneumothorax
- SBP < 90
- Major trauma, especially head injury or significant chest trauma

• Complications:

- Hypotension
- Pneumothorax
- Corneal drying

EMT Epinephrine Auto-Injector Administration Criteria (epinephrine auto-injector optional skills providers only)

- Candidates for administration of auto-injector epinephrine by authorized EMT personnel are patients with suspected asthma, in severe distress (**auto-injector epinephrine for asthma is not authorized for PSFA or EMR personnel**)

Epinephrine should be used cautiously in patients > 35 years old, or with a history of CAD or HTN

BLS

- Assess respiratory status, administer high flow O₂, manage airway & assist ventilation as appropriate
- Assess V/S, including SpO₂
- Consider CPAP, when appropriate, for moderate to severe distress
- Assess history and physical, determine degree of illness – fever, sputum production, medications, asthma, COPD, CHF, exposures, hypertension, tachycardia, JVD, edema

Epinephrine auto-injector provider?

NO

YES

Suspected asthma in severe distress?

NO

YES

Monitor & reassess

See page 2 for ALS treatment

Epinephrine Adult (> 30 kg) Auto-injector
• 0.3 mg (0.3 mL) – inject deep IM into lateral thigh, midway between waist and knee



Acute Respiratory Distress

Asthma/COPD

LALS

Mild Distress

- Mild wheezing
- Mild shortness of breath
- Cough

Cardiac monitor (AEMT II ONLY)

Consider IV NS (may bolus up to 1000 mL)

Albuterol 5 mg via nebulizer

- May repeat if respiratory distress continues

Moderate to Severe Distress

- Cyanosis
- Accessory muscle use
- Inability to speak > 3 words
- Severe wheezing/shortness of breath
- Decreased or absent air movement

Cardiac monitor (AEMT II ONLY)

IV NS (may bolus up to 1000 mL)

Albuterol 5 mg via nebulizer/CPAP/BVM

- May repeat if respiratory distress continues

History of asthma with severe distress only

Epinephrine 1:1,000

- 0.01 mg/kg IM (max dose = 0.5 mg)

CHF/Pulmonary Edema

LALS

Mild Signs & Symptoms

Cardiac monitor (AEMT II ONLY)

IV NS TKO

***Nitroglycerin**

- 0.4 mg SL
- May repeat every 5 minutes

***Nitroglycerin Notes/Precautions**

- Do not administer if SBP < 100
- Do not delay due to difficult vascular access
- Consult with base/modified base hospital prior to administration for pts taking erectile dysfunction or pulmonary HTN medication

Moderate to Severe Signs & Symptoms

Cardiac monitor (AEMT II ONLY)

- Assess BP x 2 to confirm accuracy
- IV NS TKO

***Nitroglycerin – titrate dose based on SBP**

- SBP 100 – 150: 0.4 mg SL
- SBP 150 – 200: 0.8 mg SL
- SBP > 200: 1.2 mg SL
- May repeat titrated doses every 5 minutes based on repeat BP