

TREATMENT PROTOCOL

S-136

RESPIRATORY DISTRESS

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BLS ALS

- Ensure patent airway
- Reassurance
- Dislodge any airway obstruction. Treat per Airway Obstruction Protocol (S-121)
- O2 saturation
- O2 and/or ventilate PRN
- Transport in position of comfort
- Carboxyhemoglobin monitor PRN, if available
- May assist patient to self-medicate own prescribed MDI once only. BH contact required for additional dose(s)

Toxic inhalation (e.g., CO exposure, smoke, gas)

- Move patient to safe environment
- 100% O₂ via mask
- Consider transport to facility with hyperbaric chamber for suspected CO poisoning for unconscious or pregnant patients

Croup-like cough

 Aerosolized saline or water 5 mL via O2powered nebulizer/mask, MR PRN

- Monitor/EKG
- Capnography PRN
- IV/IO ®
- Intubate PRN
- NG/OG PRN

Suspected CHF/cardiac origin

- NTG1 SL
 - If systolic BP ≥100 but <150: NTG 0.4 mg SL, MR q3-5 min [®]
 - If systolic BP >150: NTG 0.8 mg SL, MR q3-5 min [®]
- CPAP 5-10 cmH₂O

Suspected non-cardiac origin²

- Albuterol/Levalbuterol 6 mL via nebulizer, MR ®
- Ipratropium bromide 2.5 mL 0.02% via nebulizer added to first dose of albuterol/levalbuterol
- CPAP 5-10 cmH₂O

Severe respiratory distress/failure or inadequate response to nebulized treatments consider

History of asthma or suspected allergic reaction

• Epinephrine 0.5 mg 1:1,000 IM, MR x2 q5 min [®]

Notes:

- For respiratory arrest, immediately start BVM ventilation
- Use caution with CPAP in patients with COPD; start low and titrate pressure
- Epinephrine IM: Use caution if known cardiac history, history of hypertension, SBP >150 mmHg, or age >40
- Fireline paramedics without access to O₂ may use MDI

¹ NTG is contraindicated in patients who have taken erectile dysfunction medications such as sildenafil (Viagra®), tadalafil (Cialis®), and vardenafil (Levitra®) within 48 hours; and pulmonary hypertension medications such as sildenafil (Revatio®), and epoprostenol sodium (Flolan®) and (Veletri®) ² Infection control: If concerned about aerosolized infectious exposure, substitute with MDI, if available