



County of Santa Cruz

HEALTH SERVICES AGENCY

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EMERGENCY MEDICAL
SERVICES PROGRAM

Protocol No. R2
Reviewed 4/2009

Emergency Medical Services Program

Approved

Medical Director

Subject: RESPIRATORY DISTRESS – SUSPECTED PULMONARY ORIGIN

I. BLS Treatment Protocol:

- A. Treat life threats. (See Policy 4000)
- B. Prepare for transport / transfer of care.

II. ALS Treatment Protocol:

- A. Treat life threats. (See Policy 4000)
- B. If bronchospasm or wheezes are present, administer Albuterol 5mg via nebulizer.
May repeat as needed. If heart rate > 160 bpm, contact Base Station.
- C. Albuterol may also be used to treat respiratory distress without wheezes secondary to pneumonia, decompensated COPD, etc., in instances where bronchodilation may improve the patient's respiratory status.
- D. Consider CPAP (Policy 5800)
- E. Epinephrine: May be used to treat suspected asthmatics in severe distress (must be status 4-5 and at least one of the following: ALOC, significant accessory muscle use, fatigue, inability to speak, low SA02, poor skin signs) without history of COPD:
 - 1.) Less than 50 years of age without known CAD/HTN – 0.3mg 1:1,000 IM; contact Base Station ASAP after administration.
 - 2.) 50 years or greater and/or known CAD/HTN – contact Base Station prior to administration. If approved, 0.3mg 1:1,000 IM.
- F. Transport
- G. Contact Base Station.

Notes: Refer to Policy 5800 for full details on CPAP