

Asthma/ Difficulty Breathing



Things to Keep in Mind:

- > First question for caller, "Is your baby/child having difficulty breathing? Are his/ her lips pink?"
- > Don't worry about the "5 questions" if the parent answers yes, triage for adequate oxygenation. If patient is in true respiratory distress, verify DOB and MD and move straight to protocol.
- > Parents often label noisy breathing as wheezing: it is important to define wheezing as a high-pitched whistle on exhalation. Listen to breath sounds and document what you hear.

Determine caller's level of respiratory distress by describing how it looks:

- > Does your child have nasal flaring... do the nostrils flare out and in with each breath?
- > Do you see retractions, this looks like the stomach pulling in where the rib cage starts?
- > Is your child irritable and sweaty?
- > Undress so you can see his stomach, can you count every time his stomach moves out, I will time you.
- > Take RR for 15 sec and determine if wnl.
- > If child is old enough, ask caller to have her sing a song. This will help you determine if she is short of breath.

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Which Protocol?

- > If previously diagnosed with Asthma or has asthma meds- use Asthma protocol
- > Under 2 y/o, use Asthma protocol if child has Bronchodilator on hand prn.
- > If chief complaint is cough and bronchodilators have been prescribed in the past, use Asthma protocol and cough protocol and triage the higher disposition.

Documentat on:

- > If child had HX of Asthma, or RAD and parent is calling about vomiting, always document “no respiratory distress at this time” in your assessment.
- > Don’t forget to review s/sx of respiratory distress in global orders and remove s/sx not discussed.

Asthma Quick Relief (Rescue) Treatments:

- > Give/ take the quick relief (Rescue) medicine (albuterol or xopenex) (**Canada:** salbutamol) treatment immediately
- > Give either a neb treatment or an inhaler treatment (4 puffs) Wait 1 minute between each puff
- > In 20 minutes, repeat the neb or inhaler treatment (4 puffs)
- > RN will call to reassess