

Southern Illinois Regional EMS System

EE-20 AIRWAY OBSTRUCTION

ALS/ILS/BLS

1. General Principles:
 - 1.1. Determine responsiveness and ability to speak.
 - 1.2. Position patient to open airway:
 - 1.2.1. If unconscious:
 - 1.2.1.1. Use head tilt/chin lift.
 - 1.2.2. If possible c-spine injury:
 - 1.2.2.1. Use modified jaw thrust.
 - 1.3. Assess breathlessness and degree of airway impairment.
 - 1.4. Monitor for cardiac dysrhythmias and/or arrest.
 - 1.5. Do not delay transport.
2. Conscious and Able to Speak:
 - 2.1. Complete Initial Medical Care:
 - 2.1.1. Do not interfere with patient's own attempts to clear airway by coughing or sneezing.
3. Conscious and Cannot Speak:
 - 3.1. 5 abdominal thrusts (Heimlich maneuver) with victim standing or sitting.
 - 3.2. 5 chest thrusts if patient in 2nd – 3rd trimester of pregnancy or morbidly obese.
 - 3.3. 5 back blows and chest thrusts in infants under 1 year of age.
 - 3.4. Repeat If No Response.
 - 3.5. If successful, complete initial medical care and transport.
 - 3.6. Still Obstructed:
 - 3.6.1. Continue previous steps while en-route until foreign body expelled or patient becomes unconscious.
 - 3.7. Rapid transport.
4. Unconscious – ALS/ILS:
 - 4.1. Attempt to ventilate. If obstructed:
 - 4.1.1. Visualize airway with laryngoscope and attempt to clear using forceps and/or suction.
 - 4.2. Still obstructed:
 - 4.2.1. 5 abdominal thrusts (Heimlich maneuver).
 - 4.2.2. 5 chest thrusts if patient in 2nd – 3rd trimester of pregnancy or morbidly obese.
 - 4.2.3. 5 back blows and chest thrusts in infants under 1 year of age.
 - 4.2.4. Repeat If No Response.
 - 4.3. Still obstructed:
 - 4.3.1. Attempt forced ventilation.
 - 4.4. Still obstructed:
 - 4.4.1. Intubate and push foreign body into right mainstem bronchus.
 - 4.4.2. Then pull back tube and ventilate left lung.
 - 4.5. Still obstructed:
 - 4.5.1. ALS:
 - 4.5.1.1. Perform cricothyrotomy.
 - 4.5.1.2. Ventilate with 100% oxygen/BVM.
 - 4.6. Rapid transport.

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(continued)

5. Unconscious BLS:
 - 5.1. Continue with step 3.
 - 5.2. Rapid Transport.

6. Note:
 - 6.1. Any time efforts to clear the airway are successful:
 - 6.1.1. Initial Medical Care.
 - 6.1.2. Rapid transport.