Approved 9/2/26, Effective 1/15/27, replaces all prior versions

2H – NASAL INTUBATION ADULT

EMT-INTERMEDIATE 85

ADVANCED EMT

PARAMEDIC

Indications:

1. Hypoxia and/or hypoventilation refractory to non-invasive airway/respiratory management, including refractory to NIPPV.
2. Airway protection to minimize aspiration in the setting of sustained altered mental status with a Glasgow Coma Scale Score <8.
3. Impending airway edema in the setting of respiratory tract burns or anaphylaxis.
4. Patients more compliant with intubation attempts in a sitting position.
5. Oral anatomy, injury, or jaw clenching preventing indicated orotracheal intubation.

Contraindications:

1. Apnea.
2. Pediatric patients (age ≤12 years).
3. Suspected basilar skull fracture.
4. Mid-facial injuries with bony instability.
5. Combativeness preventing patient compliance.
6. Anticoagulant use (Warfarin/Coumadin, Plavix, or Aspirin) - Relative contraindication - orotracheal intubation preferred to minimize bleeding complications.
7. Three unsuccessful oral and/or nasal intubation attempts in the above settings. An intubation attempt has occurred when the tip of the endotracheal tube is advanced beyond the gum line or into a nostril. Attempts are counted per patient not per intubator.
8. Waveform capnography not immediately available.

Technique:

1. Apply two sprays of phenylephrine 2% in each nostril to induce local vasoconstriction. This will enlarge the nostril and decrease epistaxis complications.

2. Apply lidocaine 2% gel to the endotracheal tube cuff.

3. Insert the well-lubricated tube along the floor of the most patent nostril, bevel side facing inward toward the septum. This positioning will prevent a turbinate from being trapped in the tube and subsequently being sheared off as the tube is advanced. Pass the tube straight back (not angulated upward) with constant, gentle pressure. Do not use an endotracheal stylet in nasotracheal intubations.

4. As the tube is advanced, there is a loss of resistance as the tube passes from the nasopharynx into the oropharynx. Continue advancing the tube.

PROTOCOL 2H: Nasal Intubation – Adult, cont.

5. As the tube nears the glottis, guide the tube by listening at the adaptor. The awake patient should be instructed to deeply inspire to help guide the tube through the vocal cords and into the trachea. Correct endotracheal placement may also be assisted by rotating the tube 90 degrees so that the bevel is up and facing the glottis.

6. Once the tube has been placed, the patient should not be capable of phonation. The ability to speak after "nasotracheal intubation" actually denotes "nasoesophageal intubation." In such cases, the tube is to be slightly withdrawn and correct placement reattempted. The Flex-Guide™ may NOT be used for difficult nasotracheal intubations.

Confirmation of Nasal Endotracheal Placement:
The following sequence is to be used (and its use documented) to verify and maintain correct nasal endotracheal placement without fail:

1. **Detection of End-tidal carbon dioxide.** End-tidal carbon dioxide ($EtC0_2$) detection shall be confirmed within 60 seconds of endotracheal tube placement. The capnography adaptor is to be placed at the bag-valve device-endotracheal tube interface for the first ventilation. The normal waveform indicating correct endotracheal placement reflects a rapid upstroke with the beginning of exhalation, the exhalation plateau ending at the point of $EtC0_2$ measurement, and a rapid down stroke with the beginning of inhalation. Any waveform that does not show rhythmic rise and fall correlating with assisted ventilations indicates incorrect tube placement and the tube must be withdrawn. **To be perfectly clear, the use of an endotracheal tube for ongoing oxygenation and ventilation is dependent upon continuously measurable capnography waveforms**. See Protocol 3H -Capnography for discussion of $EtCO_2$ values.

2. **Auscultation. Auscultate the epigastrum.** If epigastric sounds are heard, intubation is to be reattempted. If no epigastric sounds are heard, proceed to **auscultation of the thorax bilaterally.** Breath sounds are best auscultated in the anterior to mid axillary lines. If breath sounds are present on the right and absent on the left, this suggests a right main stem intubation. Withdraw the endotracheal tube 1 cm and repeat breath sound auscultation. If necessary, the tube may be withdrawn an additional 1-2 cm.

3. **Assessment of physiologic changes.** These include equal rise and fall of the chest, condensation in the endotracheal tube on exhalation, improvement in the patient's color, and improvement in the patient's respiratory distress or failure.

4. **Secure the endotracheal tube with tape and place a cervical collar.**
When intubated patients are moved during EMS care, waveform capnography must be rechecked for any change. If the waveform continues to show a normal pattern of rapid upstroke with exhalation, exhalation plateau, and rapid down stroke with inhalation, no further repeat confirmation is required. If at any time, the capnography waveform is abnormal, steps 1-4 must be rechecked and documented. If at any time during patient care there is doubt as to correct endotracheal placement of intubation, you must either re-verify by this sequence or reattempt correct endotracheal placement.

PROTOCOL 2H: Nasotracheal Intubation – Adult, cont.

Confirmation of Nasal Endotracheal Placement (cont.):

While the intubator may delegate confirmation steps to his/her colleagues, he or she is ultimately responsible to ensure that a complete confirmation sequence is performed. If the intubator accompanies the patient to the hospital, he or she remains ultimately responsible for ongoing endotracheal tube placement confirmation. If the intubator does not accompany the patient to the hospital by ambulance or helicopter ambulance transport, the primary transporting/treating paramedic or RN assumes ultimate responsibility for ongoing endotracheal tube placement confirmation.