



Approach to Acute Respiratory Distress in Children

ED Pediatric Emergency Care Coordinator Quarterly Meeting
August 23, 2023

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Disclosure

- Advancing Healthier Wisconsin Grant

Objectives

- Understand the respiratory surge in children
- Recognition, evaluation and management of respiratory distress in children
- Interventions if delayed transport
- Preparation for the pediatric respiratory surge

RSV virus outbreak: Children's hospitals overwhelmed by sick kids.

Published October 22, 2022 Updated October 24, 2022 [U.S. FOX 5 NY](#)



In the 2022-2023 season, the overall rate of RSV-associated hospitalizations was 50.5 per 100,000 people.

Reset Filters Season Age Group Race/Ethnicity Sex Site

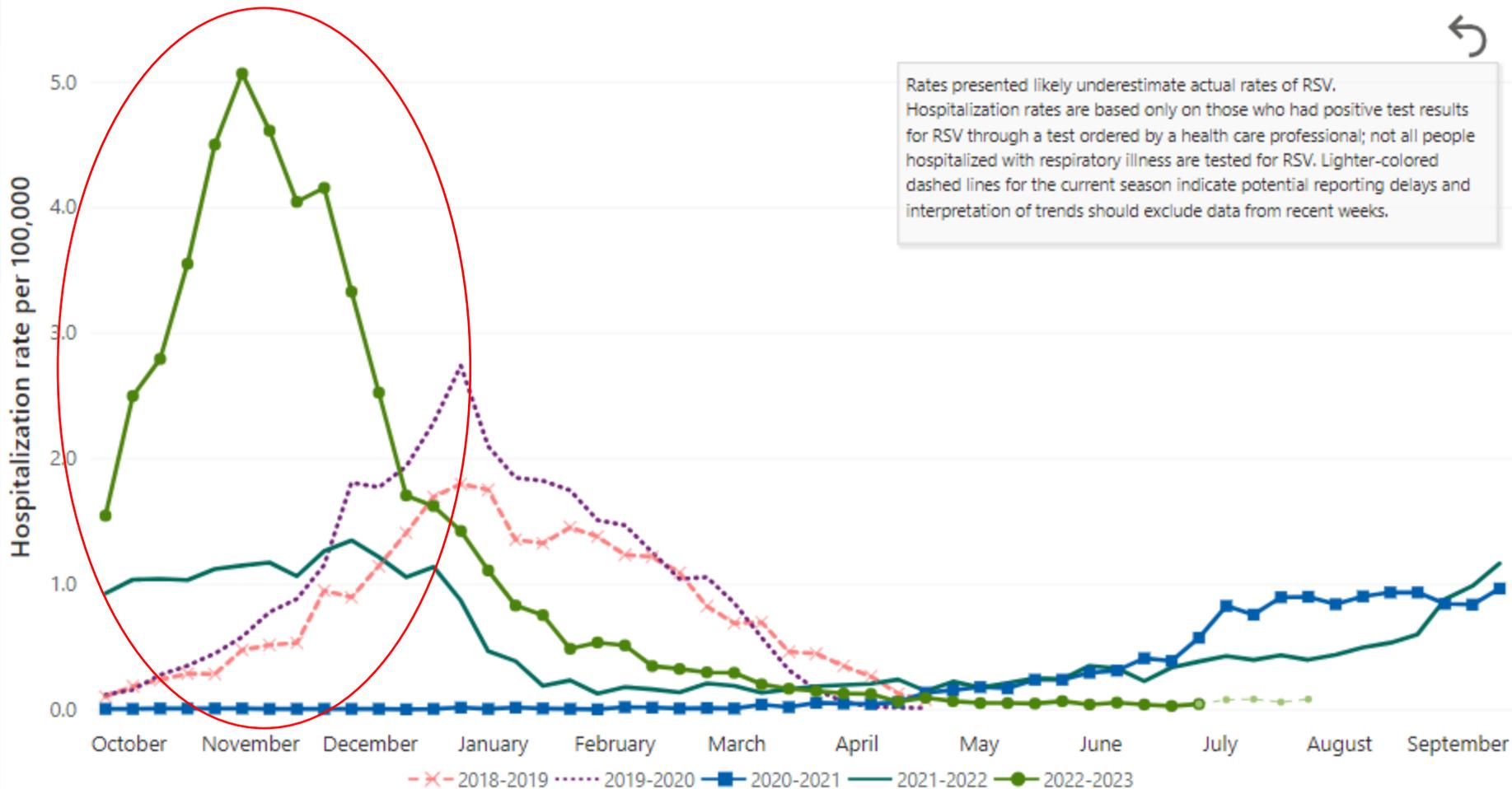
View

- Monthly Rates
- Weekly Rates
- Cumulative Rates

Filters

- Season: All
- Site: RSV-NET
- Age Group: All
- Race/Ethnicity: All
- Sex: All

Rates of RSV-Associated Hospitalization, all seasons



Surveillance Month

Data last updated: 08/16/2023 | Accessibility: Hover over graph area to display options such as show data as table and copy visual. Note: AI/AN, American Indian or Alaska Native; A/PI, Asian and Pacific Islander.

HEALTH >

Rising RSV cases threaten to overwhelm hospitals in our area, nationwide

CBS NEWS
NEW YORK

BY JOHN DIAS

UPDATED ON: DECEMBER 5, 2022 / 12:24 PM / CBS NEW YORK

Daily Briefing

'Crisis mode': RSV surge overwhelming pediatric hospitals

HEALTH

Children's hospitals grapple with a nationwide surge in RSV infections

October 24, 2022 · 5:00 AM ET

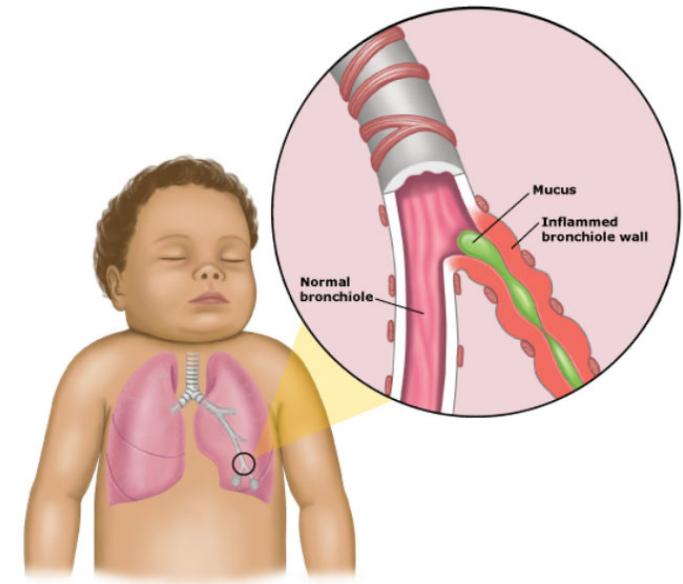
Pediatric ER doctor gives glimpse into front lines of RSV surge: 'No space anywhere'

Packed emergency rooms, long wait times, no beds. One doctor recounts how the surge in respiratory viruses like RSV is overwhelming children's hospitals.



10 mo girl in respiratory distress

- 3 days of cold & worsening
- Lethargic, grunting with severe retractions, cyanotic
- P178, R64, BP-, POX 81%
- Lethargic, moderate resp distress and pale
- NC Oxygen 4 L/min with Pox 89%
- Poor aeration with CRT >3 sec
- VBG: pH 7.25, PCO2 48, BE -7
- CXR with hazy interstitial viral infection pattern



- Suction
- IVF
- Albuterol with minimal improvement
- No bed available
- PICU consult
- Stayed in community ED for 3 days

UNDERSTANDING THE PEDIATRIC SURGE CRISIS

>75%

As of early November, more than 3 in 4 pediatric inpatient beds in the U.S. were occupied.¹

>100%

Many states have surpassed full capacity for staffed pediatric intensive care unit beds.¹

2-3X

EDs are reporting pediatric volumes as high as 2-3X as normal.^{2,3,4}

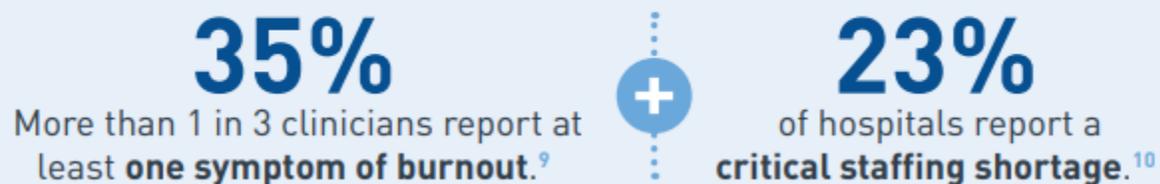
<https://pedspandemicnetwork.org/news/pediatric-surge/>

Systemic Challenges

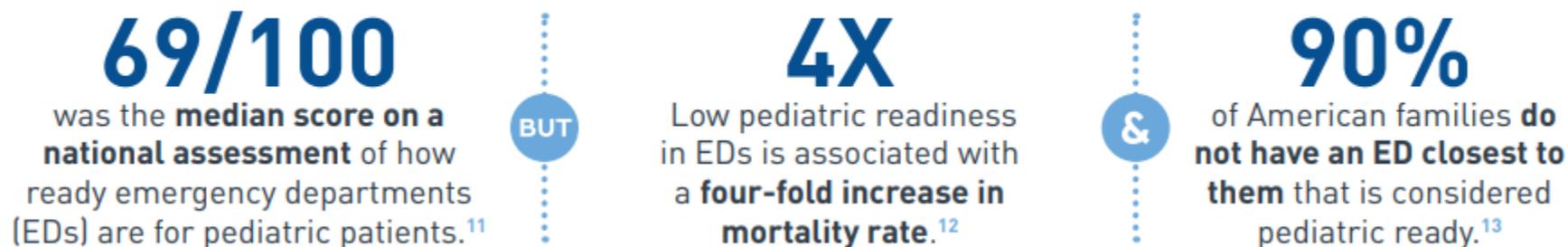
#1: Low pediatric reimbursement + high costs = shrinking services



#2: Staff stress & shortages, exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic

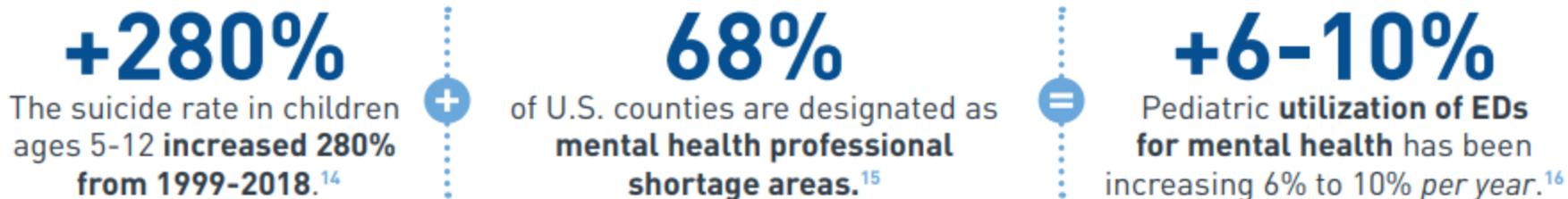


#3: Gaps in everyday readiness for children's emergencies



Public Health Challenges

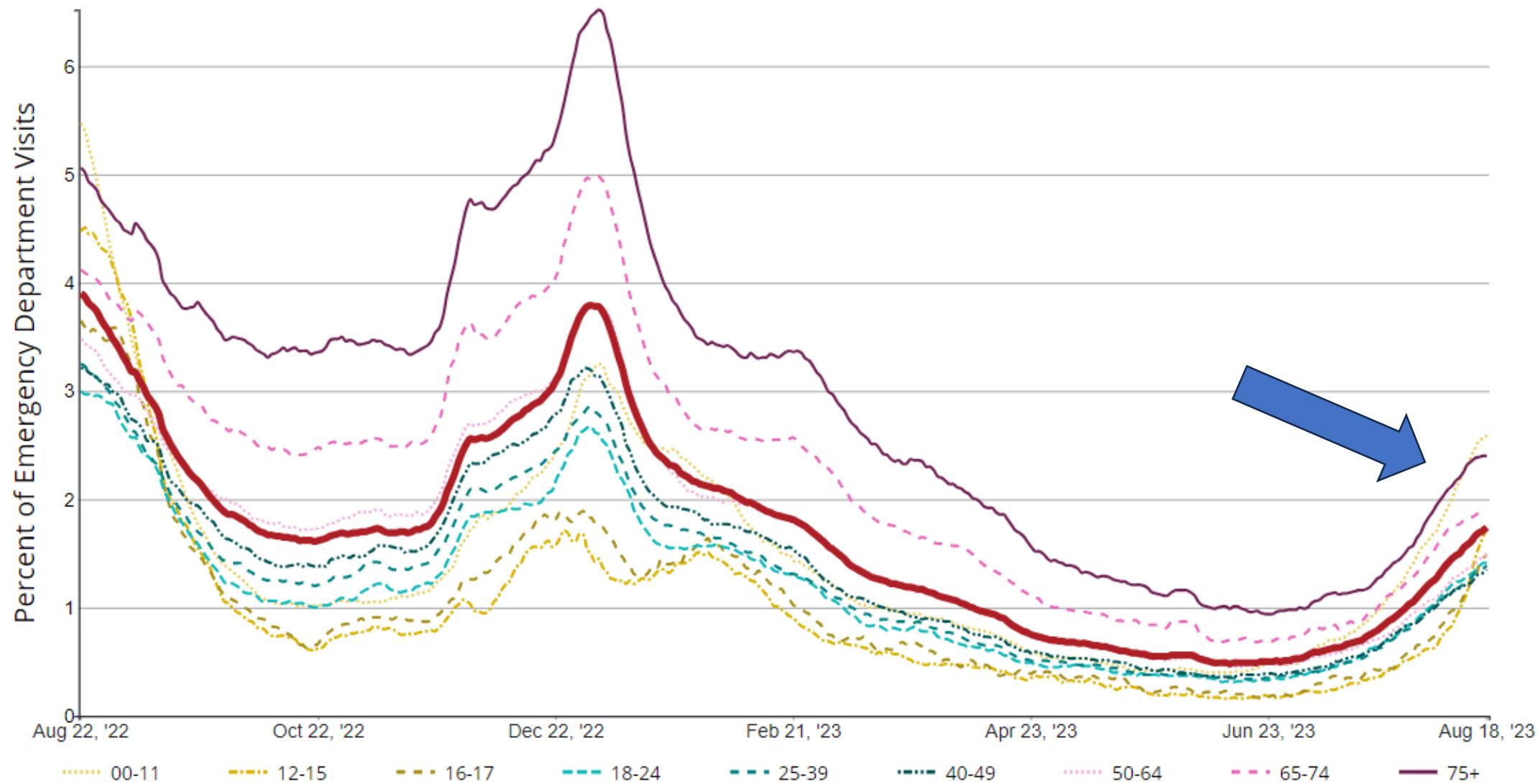
#4: The growing pediatric mental health crisis



#5: A tidal wave of respiratory illnesses



Percentage of Emergency Department Visits with Diagnosed COVID-19 in United States, by Age Group



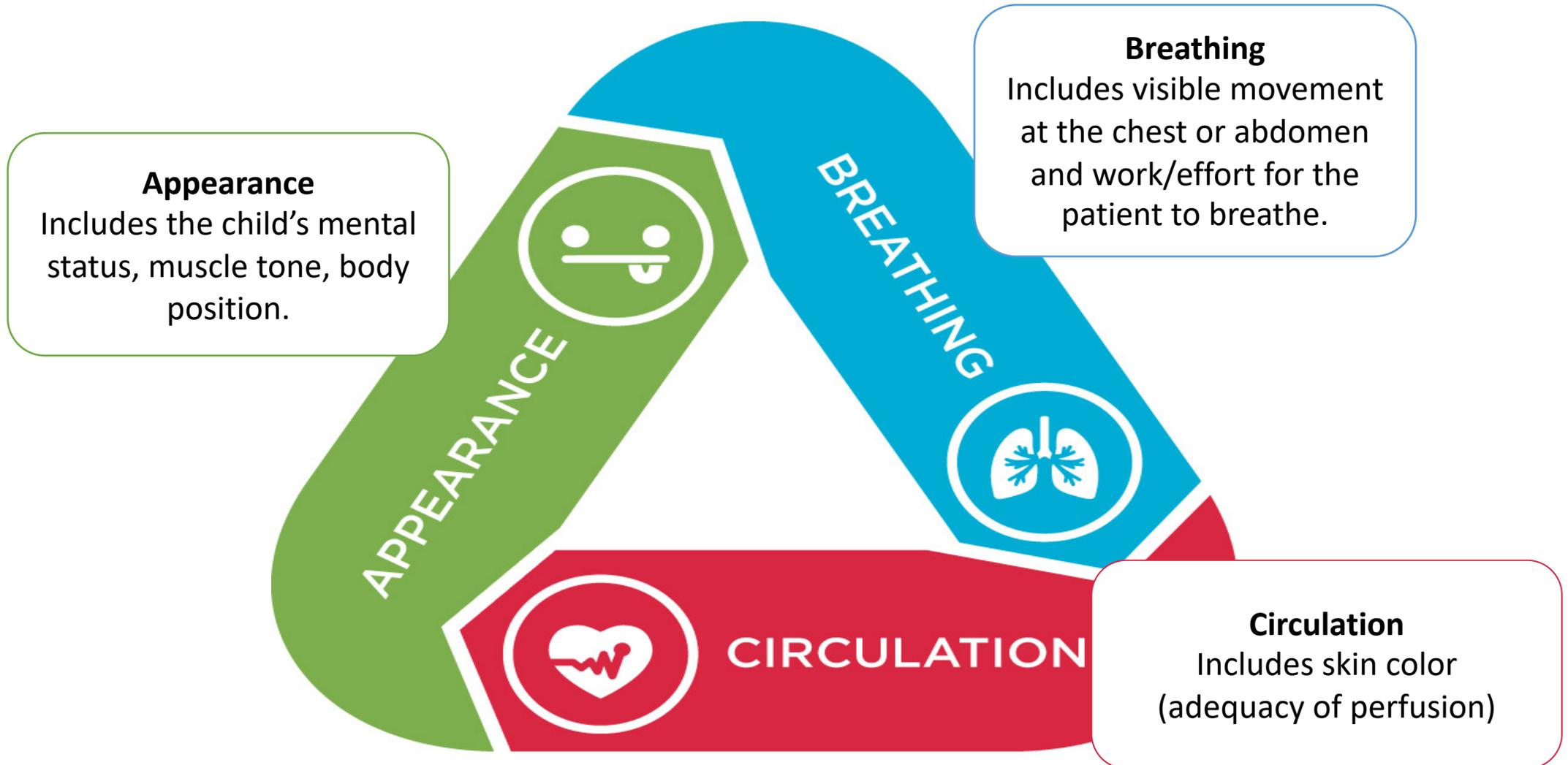


Challenges faced by community EDs

- Pediatric readiness
 - Expertise: MD, RN, RT
 - Guideline
 - Equipment
- Staffing
- Beds

Brief overview of assessment and management of pediatric respiratory emergencies

Pediatric Assessment Triangle



Helpful historical information

- Age
- Previous resp conditions
- Onset: sudden or gradual and choking
- Current symptoms: coughing, wheezing or barking
- Prodromal symptoms: runny nose or fever
- Possible triggers
- Meds and Tx given at home



Classic signs of respiratory distress and exam findings

- Visual inspection
- Degree of distress
- Position of comfort
- VS with Pulse Oximeter
- Upper airway sounds
- Lung exam
- Other systems



**IS YOUR BABY IN
RESPIRATORY DISTRESS?**

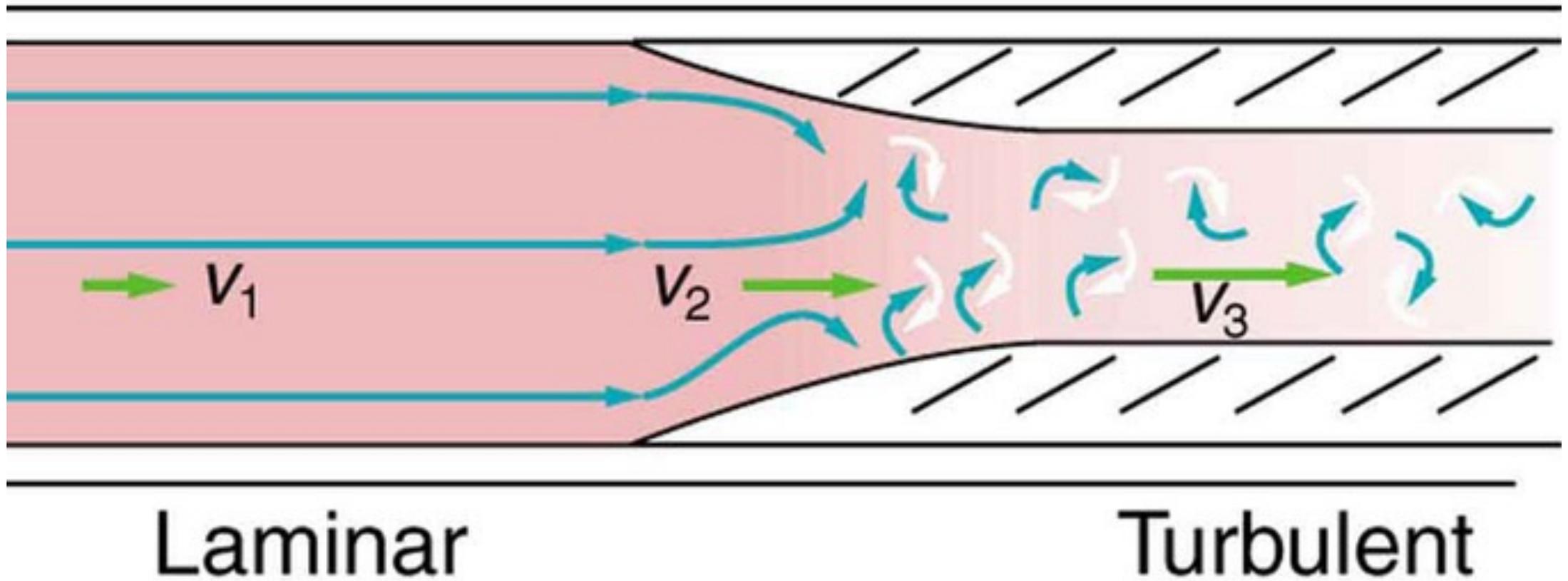
Weight, Normal Vital Signs and Equipment Estimates

AGE	Weight (kg)	Heart Rate	Respiratory Rate	BP - Systolic (mm Hg)	Laryngoscope Blade	ETT (cuffed)	LMA	King
Preterm	<3	120-160	40-60	40-60	1 straight only	2.5-3.0 (uncuffed)	1	0
Newborn	3	100-165	40-60	60-80	1 straight only	3.0	1	0
1 month	6	120-180	40-60	65-95	1 straight only	3.0	1	0
6 months	8	110-185	25-40	65-105	1 straight only	3.0	1.5	1
12 months	10	110-170	20-30	70-110	1 straight only	3.5	2	1
2 years	12	90-150	20-30	70-110	2 straight only	4.0	2	2
3 years	14	75-135	20-30	80-110	2 straight or curved	4.0	2	2
4 years	16	75-135	20-30	80-110	2 straight or curved	4.5	2	2
5 years	18	65-135	20-30	80-110	2 straight or curved	4.5	2	2
6 years	20	60-130	12-25	90-115	2 straight or curved	5.0	2.5	2.5
8 years	26	60-120	12-25	90-115	3 straight or curved	6.0	2.5	2.5
10 years	32	60-120	12-25	95-120	3 straight or curved	6.5	3	2.5
12 years	42	60-120	12-25	95-120	3 straight or curved	6.5	3	3
14 years	50	60-120	12-18	100-130	3 straight or curved	6.5	4	4

IMPORTANT

“Don’t worry. He is not wheezing!”

Sound

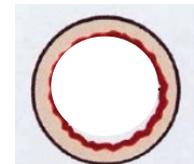
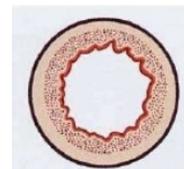
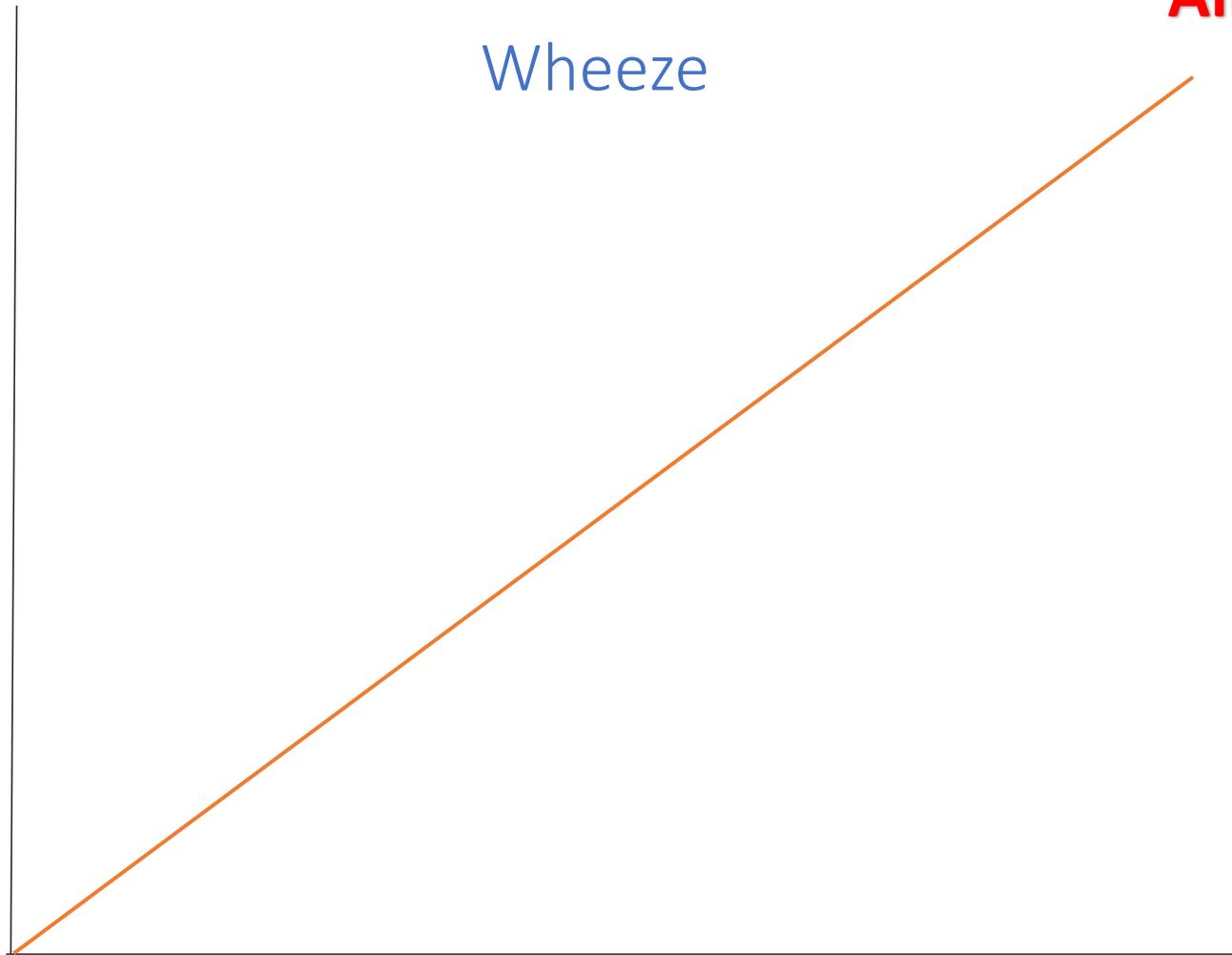


IMPORTANT

Beath sound

Wheeze

Air Entry

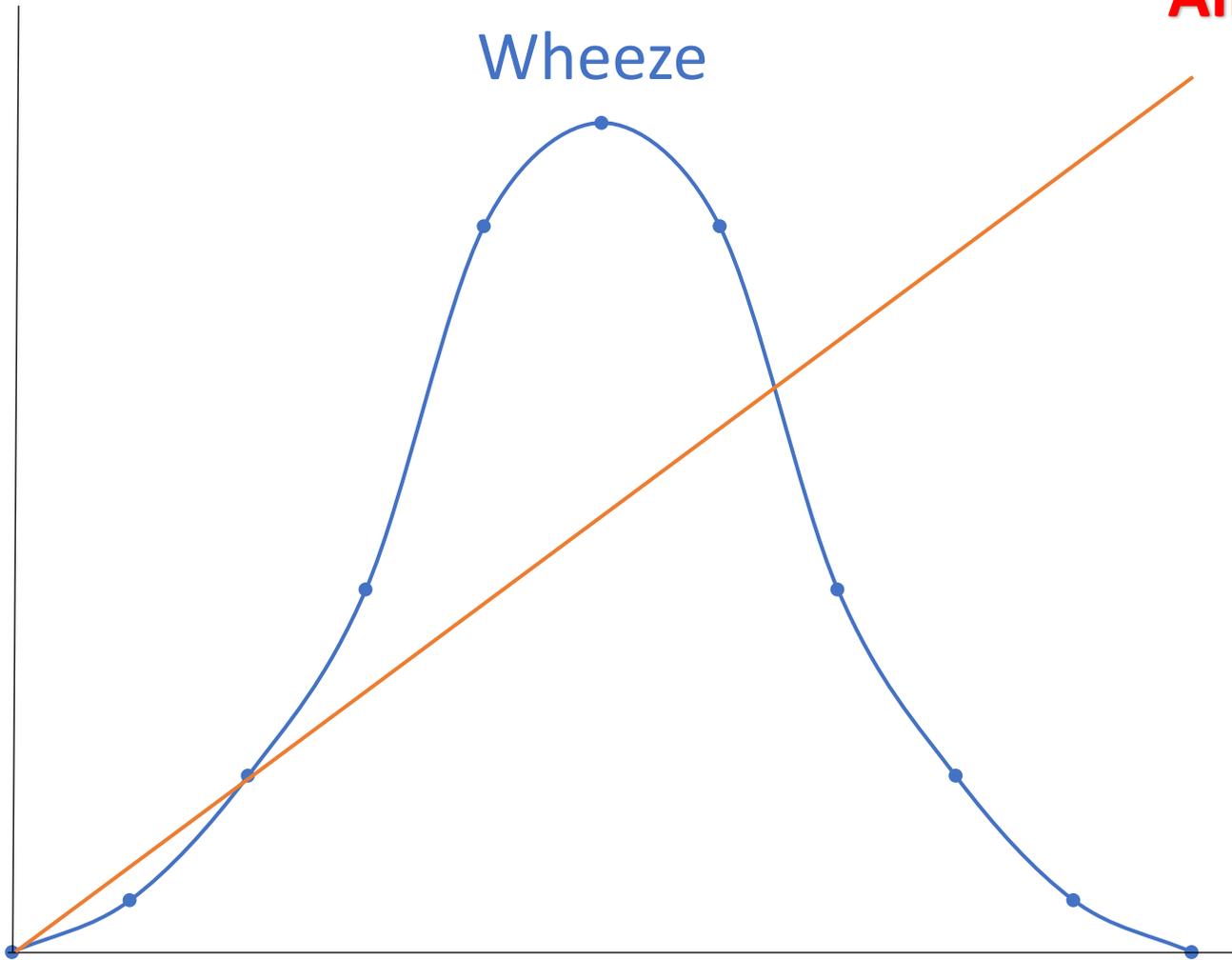
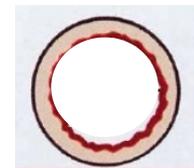
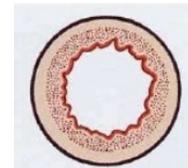


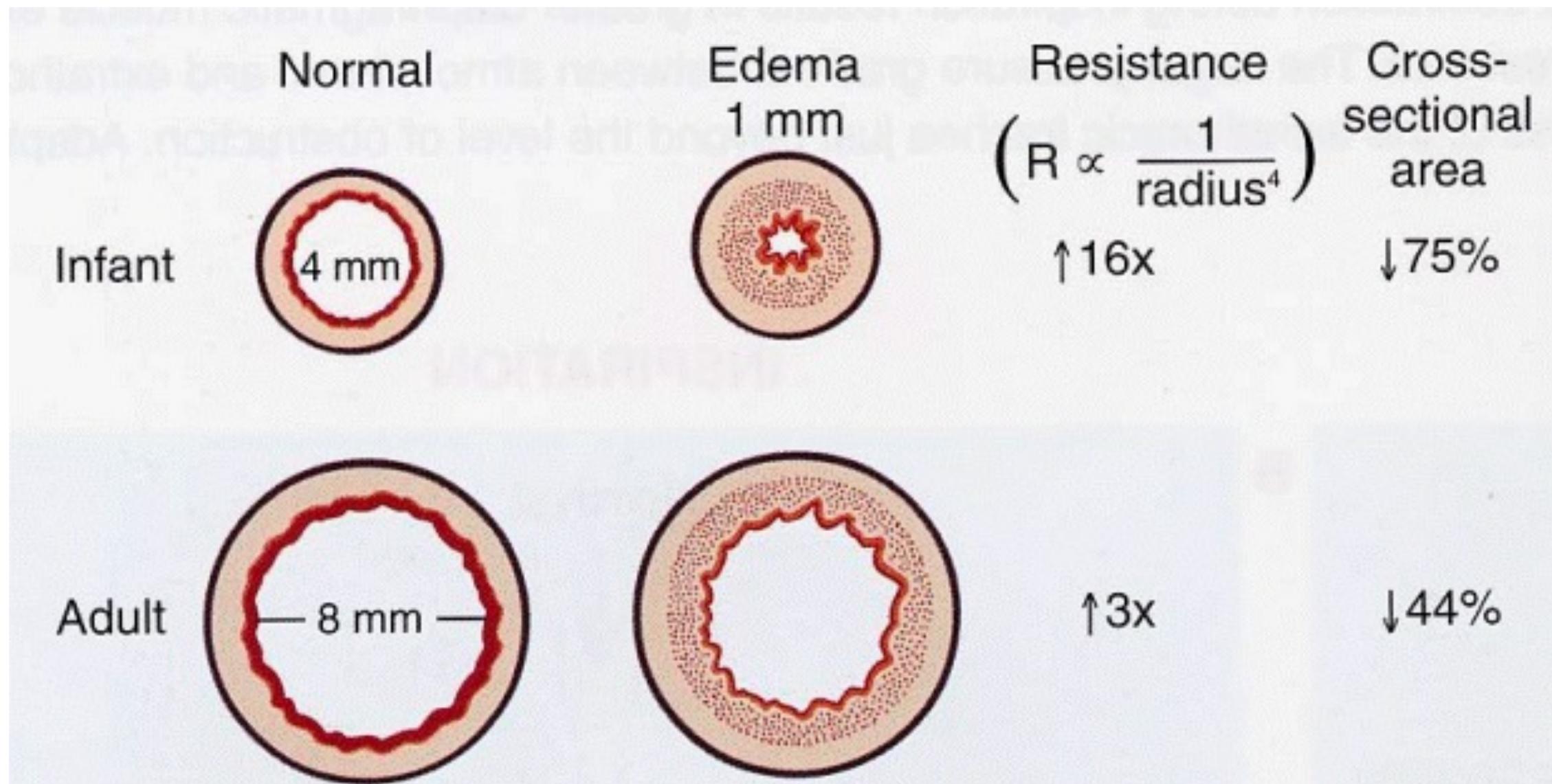
IMPORTANT

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Wheeze

Air Entry





Asthma or Bronchiolitis or Croup?

	Asthma	Bronchiolitis	Croup
Age			
Etiology			
Pathophysiology			
Problem location			
Clinical findings			
Treatment			

Asthma or Bronchiolitis or Croup?

	Asthma	Bronchiolitis	Croup
Age	> 2 YO	< 2 YO	6 mo – 3 YO
Etiology			
Pathophysiology			
Problem location			
Clinical findings			
Treatment			

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Treatment			

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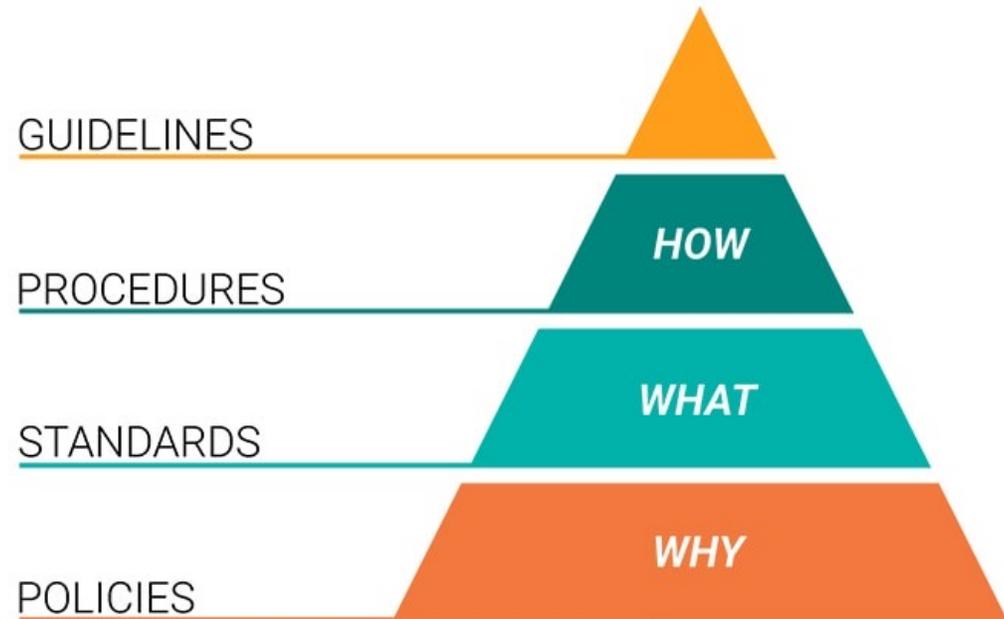
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Super Tx	Terbutaline, BiPAP, Aminophylline, ETT	HFNC, CPAP, ETT	Heliox, ETT

Policies,
procedures,
guidelines,
&
references



Vital signs

- Methods and equipment
- VS reference table
- Abnormal VS alert



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	Infant (0-12 months)	Toddler (1-2 years)	Preschool (3-5 years)	School (6-11 years)	Adolescent (12-18 years)
Pulse	110-165	100-140	80-125	70-110	60-100
Respiratory Rate	30-60	35-45	20-30	16-25	12-20
Systolic Blood Pressure	70-100	85-105	90-110	95-115	100-120
Temperature (Celsius)	36-38	36-38	36-38	36-38	36-38
Temperature (Fahrenheit)	96.8-100.4	96.8-101	96.8-101	96.8-101	96.8-102
Pulse Oximeter	>95%	>95%	>95%	>95%	>95%



EDTC PATHWAY

Asthma Clinical Practice Pathway

Box 1. Eligibility criteria include:

1. Age ≥ 2 years (children 1-2 years are eligible if discussed with MD/PA/NP)
2. Prior diagnosis of asthma or RAD without other significant comorbidities (tracheostomy, cardiac disease)
3. Acute symptoms of an exacerbation (wheezing, difficulty breathing, significant cough)

Box 2. Asthma assessment components

1. Respiratory rate, oxygen saturation
2. PASS Score
3. Peak flow (If older than 5 years and able to complete)

Is patient eligible for asthma clinical pathway? (Box 1)

NO → Patient off clinical pathway

YES → Nurse or RCP begins asthma assessment
See Box 2

Box 3. Adjunct Therapies

1. Epinephrine 1:1000, 0.01 mL/kg SC (max 0.3mL)
2. Heliox 70/30 (if no oxygen requirement)
3. Terbutaline 2mcg/kg IV bolus, then 0.1mcg/kg/min infusion
4. Aminophylline 5-7 mg/kg IV load over 20-30 minutes. Maintenance dosing: <https://connect.chw.org/Search?keywords=aminophylline&context=intranet>
5. CPAP/BIPAP for impending or actual respiratory failure.

PASS 0-2

PASS 3-6

Patient roomed if available. If not, initial treatment below provided in triage.

Patient immediately roomed in main ED and attending notified.

Initial Treatment

Initial Treatment

EDTC PASS 0-2 Order Set

1. Supplemental oxygen as needed to maintain SpO₂ $\geq 92\%$
2. Administer Short-acting β -agonist (SABA) per protocol or by provider order
3. Consider additional SABA via inhaler with spacer and teaching
4. Provider to order albuterol q20 minutes x2 for PASS ≥ 2
5. Add ipratropium bromide (Atrovent®) 0.5 mg if recent albuterol treatments given at home or via EMS
6. Administer oral steroids for patients requiring more than one SABA treatment: Decadron 0.6mg/kg (Max 16 mg). (Strongly consider for any patient with significant asthma history or prolonged symptoms.)

EDTC PASS 3-6 Order Set

1. Supplemental oxygen as needed to maintain SpO₂ $\geq 92\%$
2. Administer continuous albuterol and ipratropium bromide
3. Oral corticosteroids: Decadron 0.6mg/kg (Max 16 mg). Consider methylprednisolone IV at 2mg/kg for vomiting or inability to tolerate PO (max dose 60-80 mg).
4. Assess PASS every 15 minutes
5. For PASS ≥ 5 strongly consider early IV magnesium sulfate or other adjunct treatments (Box 3)

Reassess PASS within 15 minutes

PASS <2

PASS ≥ 2

Likely Discharge

1. Complete teaching
2. Encourage PMD follow-up within 5-7 days
3. Further treatment per MD discretion

1. Administer up to two additional SABA and ipratropium treatments (treatments 2 & 3) every 20 minutes for PASS ≥ 2

2. Reassess PASS within 15 minutes of each treatment

PASS <2

PASS ≥ 2

Possible Discharge

1. Observe 30-60minutes post treatment
2. Further treatment per MD discretion

EDTC Asthma Ongoing Care Order Set

1. Continuous albuterol
2. IV magnesium sulfate (if not already given)
3. Further adjunctive treatment per MD discretion (Box 3)

EDTC Asthma Ongoing Care Order Set

1. Consider continuous albuterol
2. Consider IV Magnesium

Consider Admission (Page 2)

This information is intended as a guideline for the management of children with Asthma. Management of the actual patient may require a more individualized approach.



EDTC PATHWAY

Asthma Admission Algorithm

Patients at increased risk of needed admission:

1. Combined PASS and total number of β -agonists treatments administered > 5
 - a. Continuous albuterol considered equivalent to 3 treatments

- ✓ Received treatment in CHW ED for at least 2 hours
- ✓ Received at least 6 albuterol treatments (equivalent of 2 hours continuous)
- ✓ Received steroids
- ✓ May receive IV magnesium (should be strongly considered for those not responding to albuterol)

- PASS Score < 4 or
- PASS Score is improving*

- PASS Score ≥ 4 and
- PASS Score is not improving*, or
- O₂ requirement $> 6L$ by facemask and $> 3L$ by nasal cannula

Escalation in care as clinically indicated:

- ✓ Continuous albuterol
- ✓ IV magnesium if not given
- ✓ IV terbutaline/aminophylline
- ✓ Noninvasive or invasive ventilation

Floor placement

Patients may require frequent albuterol treatments or continuous albuterol treatments on the floor.

PICU placement

Patients requiring rapid escalation in care may not have 2 hours of treatment at time of bed request.

Croup¹ Clinical Practice Guideline

Criteria for use of Guideline:

Inclusion:

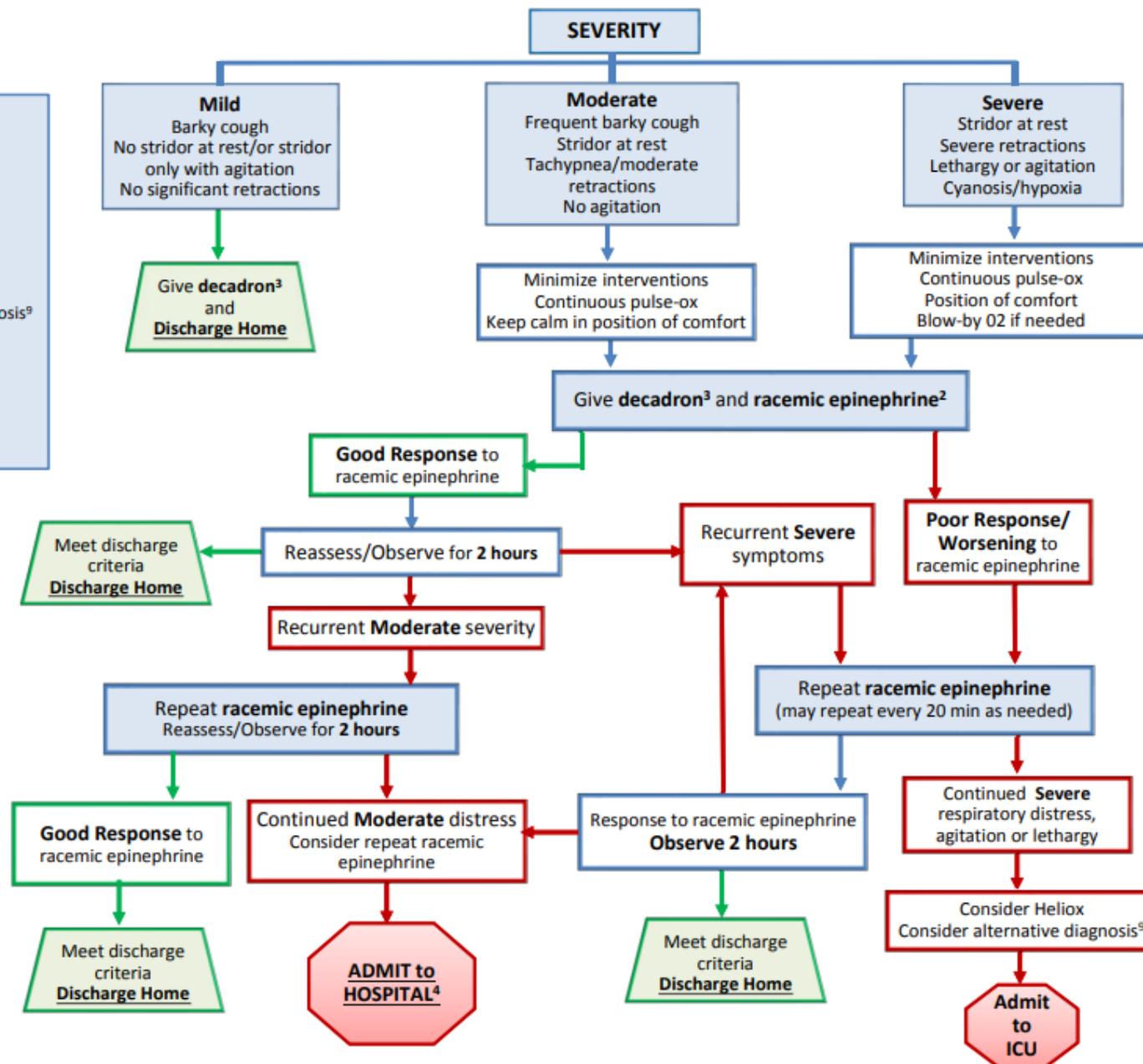
- Previously healthy children
- Common age: 6 months–6years
- History & clinical exam consistent with primary diagnosis of croup¹

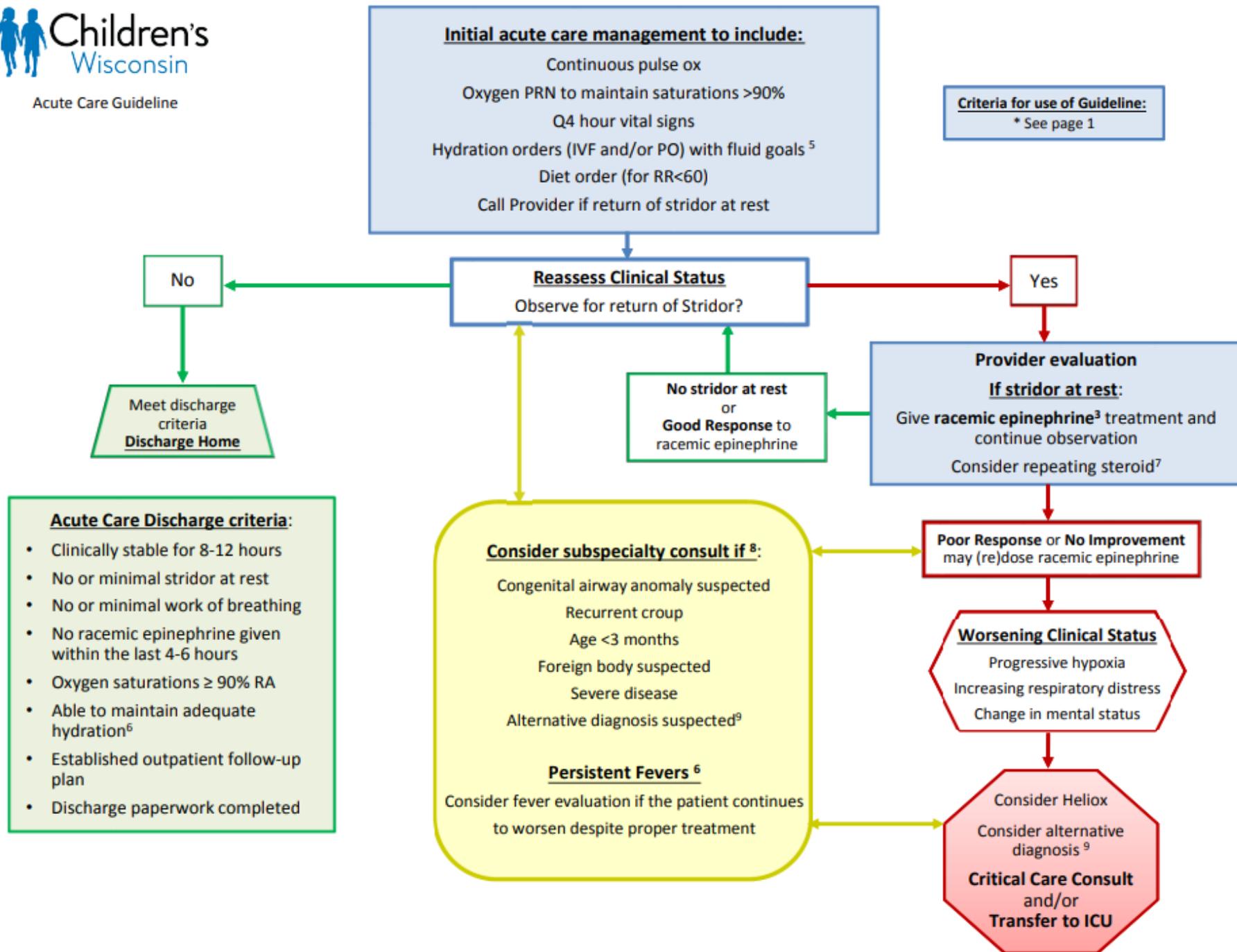
Exclusion:

- Toxic appearance
- Symptoms suggestive of alternative diagnosis⁹
- Known upper airway abnormality
- Recent airway instrumentation
- History of chronic/recurrent aspiration
- Neurologic impairment/neuromuscular weakness
- Immunocompromise

EDTC Discharge Criteria:

- Minimal or no stridor at rest
- Able to tolerate oral intake
- 2 hours post racemic epinephrine





Emergency Department Clinical Pathway for Evaluation/Treatment of Children with Bronchiolitis

- [Goals and Metrics](#)
- [Patient Education](#)
- [Provider Resources](#)

Related Pathways
[Bronchiolitis, Inpatient](#)
[Bronchiolitis, Oral/Enteral Feeding, ED and Inpatient](#)

Quality Story
[Reducing Albuterol Use in Children with Bronchiolitis](#)

[Sample Bronchiolitis Pathway Patient Progression](#)
[Sample Bronchiolitis Pathway Patient Progression on HFNC](#)

Supportive Care
 Suction
 Hydration, nutrition
 Supplemental oxygen
 Pulse oximetry
 Fever Management

[Infant With Typical Bronchiolitis](#)
 Triage

Additional Treatment Considerations
 Albuterol Trial
 Racemic epinephrine
 Antibiotics
 Hypertonic Saline
[Further Diagnostic Testing](#)

Consider [ED Asthma Pathway](#) if:
 Recurrent wheezing / prior steroid use
 Age > 12 months
 Strong response to albuterol

History and Physical
 Initial Respiratory Assessment

Mild

Consider Suction-bulb

Discharge Criteria

- Oxygen saturation > 90% awake
- Adequate oral intake
- Mild/moderate work of breathing
- Reliable caretaker
- Able to obtain follow-up care
- MDI/spacer teaching if response to albuterol

Moderate

Suction: Bulb
[Bronchodilators](#) not recommended for [typical bronchiolitis](#). If used, document reason and response.

Admission Criteria

- Base decision on:**
- Repeated assessments
 - Response to therapy
 - Stage of illness
- Admit if discharge criteria not met:**
- Inpatient:** Requires [HFNC](#), O₂ or progression expected
 - EDECU:** Mild disease with expected LOS < 24 hours
 - ICU:** Apnea, severe distress
 Requires [HFNC](#) above floor maximum, noninvasive or invasive ventilation

Infants with these risk factors present early in the illness have higher risk of progression:

- Gestational age < 34 weeks
- Respiratory rate ≥ 70
- Age < 3 months

Severe

Suction: Bulb or wall
[Bronchodilators](#) not recommended for [typical bronchiolitis](#). If used, document reason and response.
 If no improvement after suctioning, assess with attending at bedside to discuss additional treatment including initiating HFNC oxygen at 1.5 L/kg/minute – [View Job Aid](#)
 See [Enteral Feeding Guidelines](#)
 If required FiO₂ > 0.4 or continued severe distress despite increase to 2 L/kg/min / Max HFNC settings, initiate CPAP at 8 cm/0.4 Fio₂ and consult PICU.

- Evidence**
- [Reducing Albuterol Use in Children With Bronchiolitis](#)
 - [Clinical Practice Guideline: The Diagnosis, Management, and Prevention of Bronchiolitis](#)
 - [A Randomized Trial of High-Flow Oxygen Therapy in Infants with Bronchiolitis](#)
- Educational Media**
- [Bronchiolitis: A Scenario-Based Primer](#)
 - [MD/APP Learning Module](#)
 - [PEM Podcast: Bronchiolitis](#)
 - [Bronchiolitis Educational Video for Families](#)

Equipment



HFNC

Indications

- <2 YO with resp distress
- Not improving on NC in 30 min

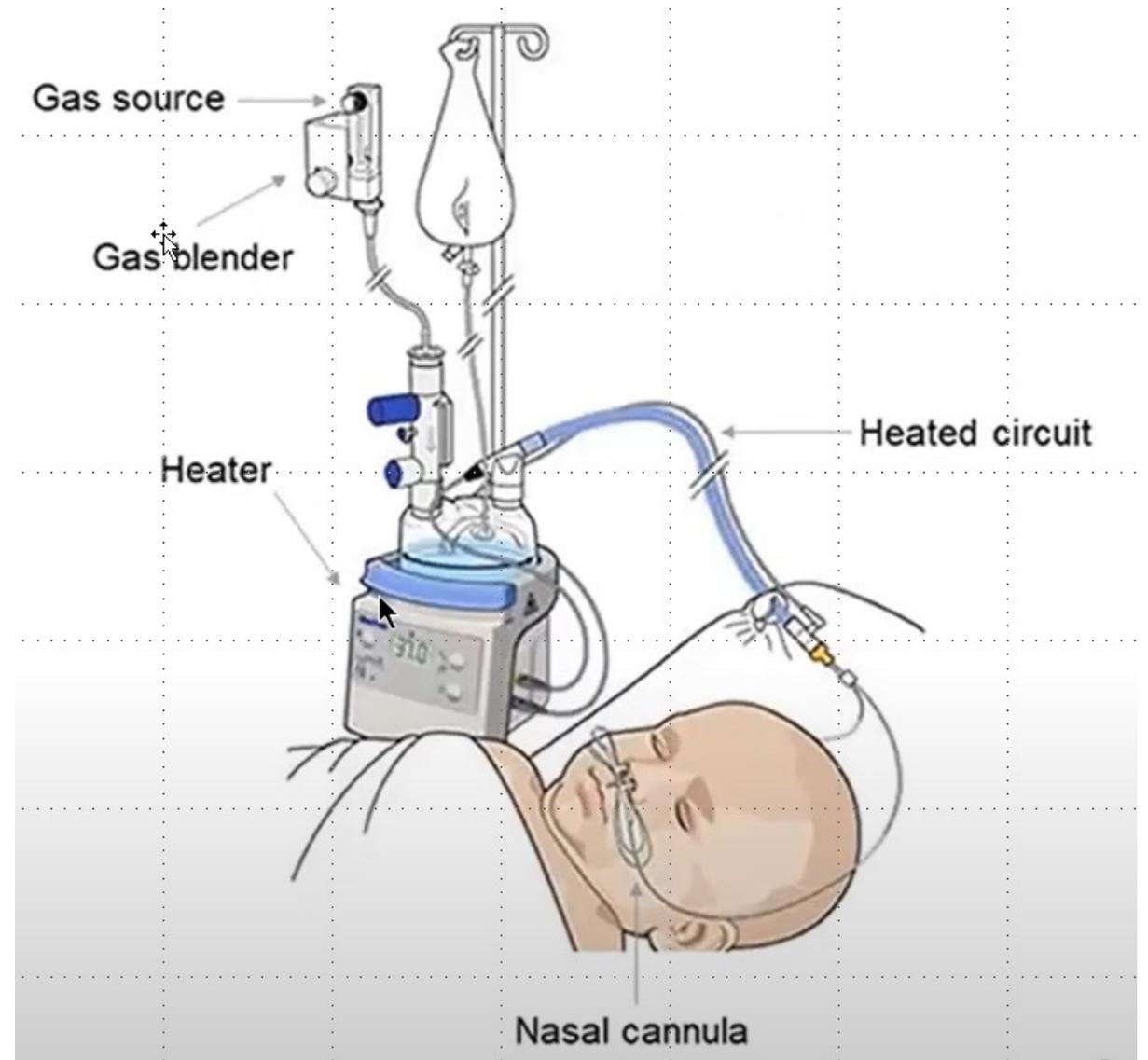


Not if

- Apneic or severe distress
- NC is adequate
- Co-morbidities

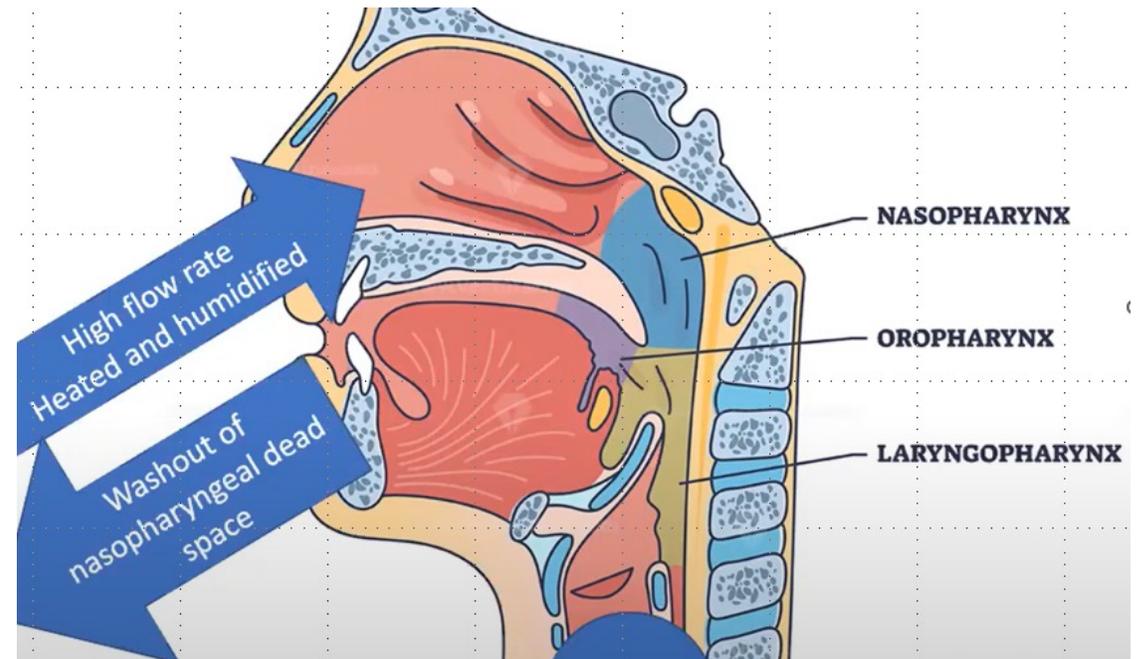
HFNC

- Humidity
- Adjustable flow: ½ to 30 L/min
- Adjust O₂



HFNC mechanism of action

- Improved WOB
- Higher FiO₂ delivered
- Decrease UAW resistance
- Less energy used
- Washout of dead space



Flow Rate

Age-Based

Age	HFNC floor maximum (L/min)	HFNC floor minimum (L/min)
44wk PMA - 90 days*	4	3
91 days - 6 months*	6	4
>6 months - 1 year	8	5
>1 year - <2 years	10	5

*Correct for gestational age

Trial HFNC at acute care max flow



Seattle Children's
HOSPITAL · RESEARCH · FOUNDATION

Weight-Based

Initiate HFNC

- Document baseline vitals to monitor effect of therapy & start at max support:
- Order HFNC at dose below:
 - Flow: **2 L/Kg*** with 30L/min maximum at York St. Campus - *maximum may differ at various delivery networks
 - FiO₂: Titrate from 21%-60% (Max 60% at York St ward) to keep $\geq 90\%$

Yale
NewHaven
Health

HFNC vs CPAP

HFNC	CPAP
Treatment failure ~0.5x low flow	Treatment failure ~0.5x HFNC
Gastric distension, poor feeding	More gastric distension, poorer feeding
More comfortable	Less comfortable
More water in circuit/patient	More skin breakdown
Low risk of pneumothorax	Slightly higher risk of pneumothorax
\$\$	\$\$\$

Monitoring

- Continuous cardiopulmonary
- VBG, CBG or clinical exam
- Intermittent POX if not continuous Oxygen Tx

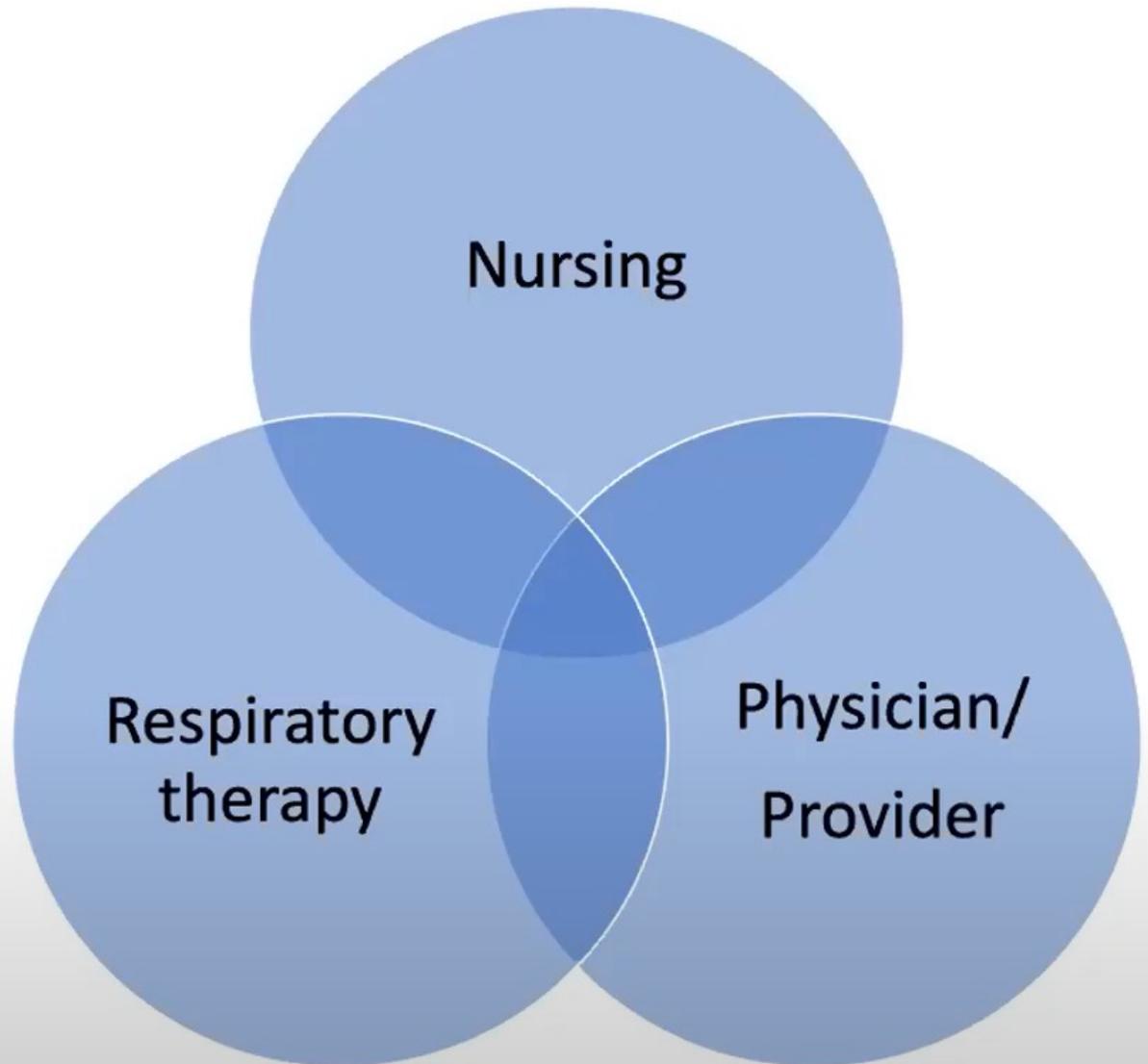
- Reassess every 30 min initially
- Use resp score

- Escalate: 3 L/kg/min up to 30 l/min then PAP or BiPAP
- Wean q 4 hours
- Off HFNC if at 0.5 l/kg/min and O₂ of <40%



Staffing

- Nurse ratios
- RT ratios
- Number of HFNC patients
- Experience of providers
- Champions and buy-in





Efficacy of High-Flow Nasal Cannula vs Standard Oxygen Therapy or Nasal Continuous Positive Airway Pressure in Children with Respiratory Distress: A Meta-Analysis

Jian Luo, MD, PhD¹, Trevor Duke, MD, FRACP², Mohammad Jobayer Chisti, MBBS, MMed, PhD^{2,3}, Elizabeth Kepreotes, PhD⁴, Valerie Kalinowski, MD, MHA⁵, and Jie Li, MS, RRT-NPS, RRT-ACCS⁶

Objectives To evaluate the efficacy of high-flow nasal cannula (HFNC) oxygen therapy in providing respiratory support of children with acute lower respiratory infection (ALRI), hypoxemia, and respiratory distress.

Study design We performed a meta-analysis of randomized controlled trials that compared HFNC and standard flow oxygen therapy or nasal continuous positive airway pressure (nCPAP) and reported treatment failure as an outcome. Data were synthesized using Mann-Whitney U test.

Results Compared with standard oxygen therapy, HFNC significantly reduced treatment failure (risk ratio [RR] 0.49, 95% CI 0.40-0.60, $P < .001$) in children with mild hypoxemia (arterial pulse oximetry [SpO_2] $>90\%$ on room air). HFNC had an increased risk of treatment failure compared with nCPAP in infants age 1-6 months with severe hypoxemia ($SpO_2 <90\%$ on room air or $SpO_2 >90\%$ on supplemental oxygen) (RR 1.77, 95% CI 1.17-2.67, $P = .007$). No significant differences were found in intubation rates and mortality between HFNC and standard oxygen therapy or nCPAP. HFNC had a lower risk of nasal trauma compared with nCPAP (RR 0.35, 95% CI 0.16-0.77, $P = .009$).

Conclusions Among children <5 years of age with ALRI, respiratory distress, and mild hypoxemia, HFNC reduced the risk of treatment failure when compared with standard oxygen therapy. However, nCPAP was associated with a lower risk of treatment failure than HFNC in infants age 1-6 months with ALRI, moderate-to-severe respiratory distress, and severe hypoxemia. No differences were found in intubation and mortality between HFNC and standard oxygen therapy or nCPAP. (*J Pediatr* 2019;215:199-208).



Clinical pathways

- CHOP: <https://www.chop.edu/clinical-pathway/bronchiolitis-emergent-evaluation-clinical-pathway>
- Seattle: <https://www.seattlechildrens.org/globalassets/documents/healthcare-professionals/clinical-standard-work/bronchiolitis-pathway.pdf>

Nurses: Engage & Educate the Family

- Nasal Suctioning
 - Keep the airway clear
 - **FREQUENT**
 - Partner with family
 - Before feeding/drinking
- Staying hydrated
 - **Empower family**
 - Encourage POs, try a syringe
 - Consider NG/OG before IV
 - Urine output
- Monitors
 - What and how pt. is monitored
 - How will you respond to alarms
 - Spot checking vs. continuous monitoring
 - When and why
- Sick vs Distress
 - Engage family from start
 - Explain your evaluation
 - Ask their opinion
 - Trust their instincts

Disposition options

- Discharge home
- Observe prior to DC
- Maximize therapy and re-evaluate
- Transfer



Escalation of care (consult)

- Keep monitoring
 - NC
 - HFNC
 - Heliox
 - NIPPV
 - Intubation
- O2
 - Alb
 - Ipratropium
 - Steroid
 - Epi
 - Magnesium
 - Terbutaline

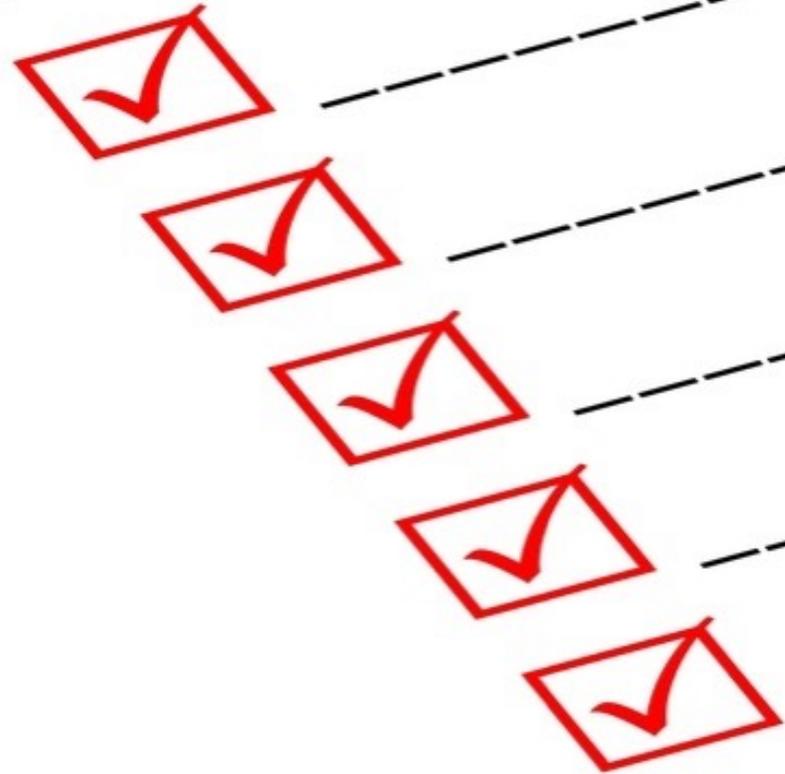


Prior to transfer

- Maximize hydration
- Consider VBG
- Sxn, sxn, sxn
- Consider CXR
- Call early if appropriate
- Method of transfer
- Intensivist consult

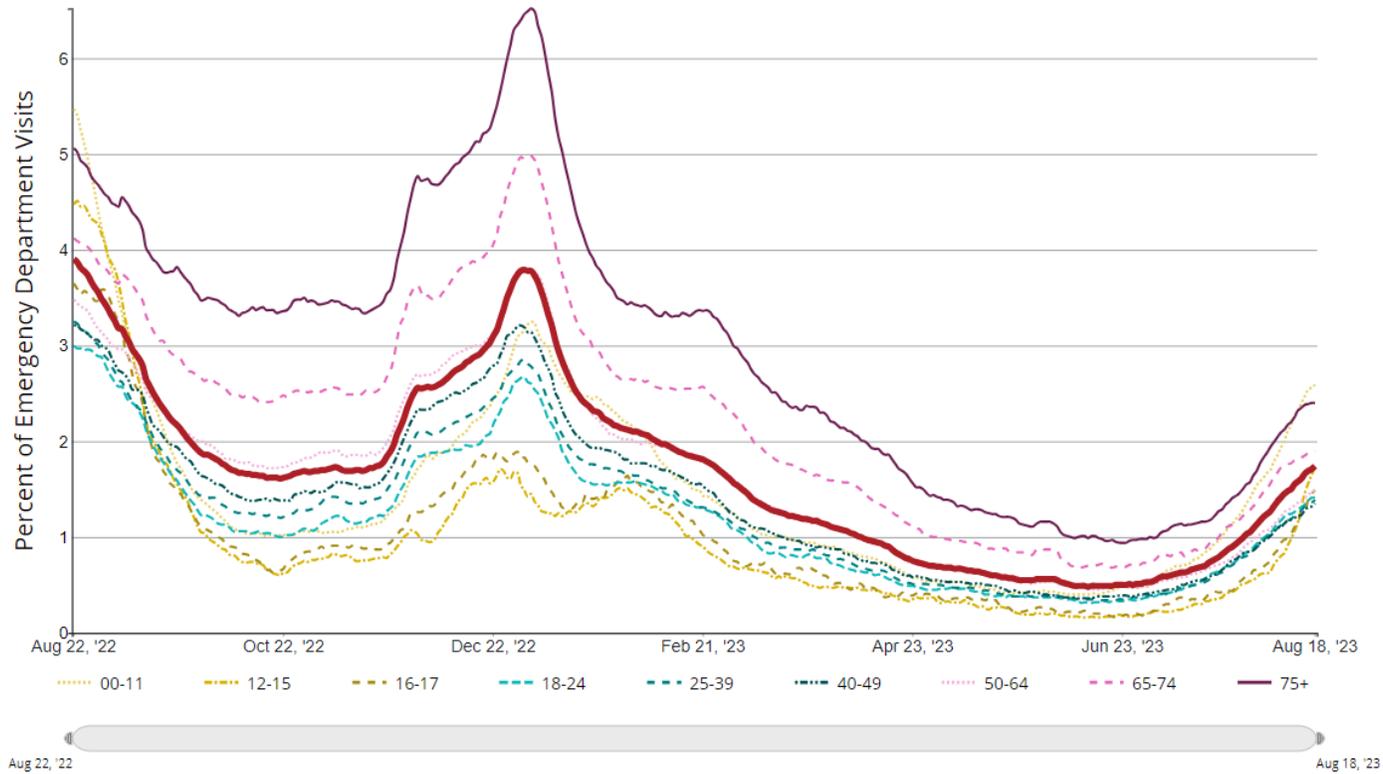


CHECKLIST

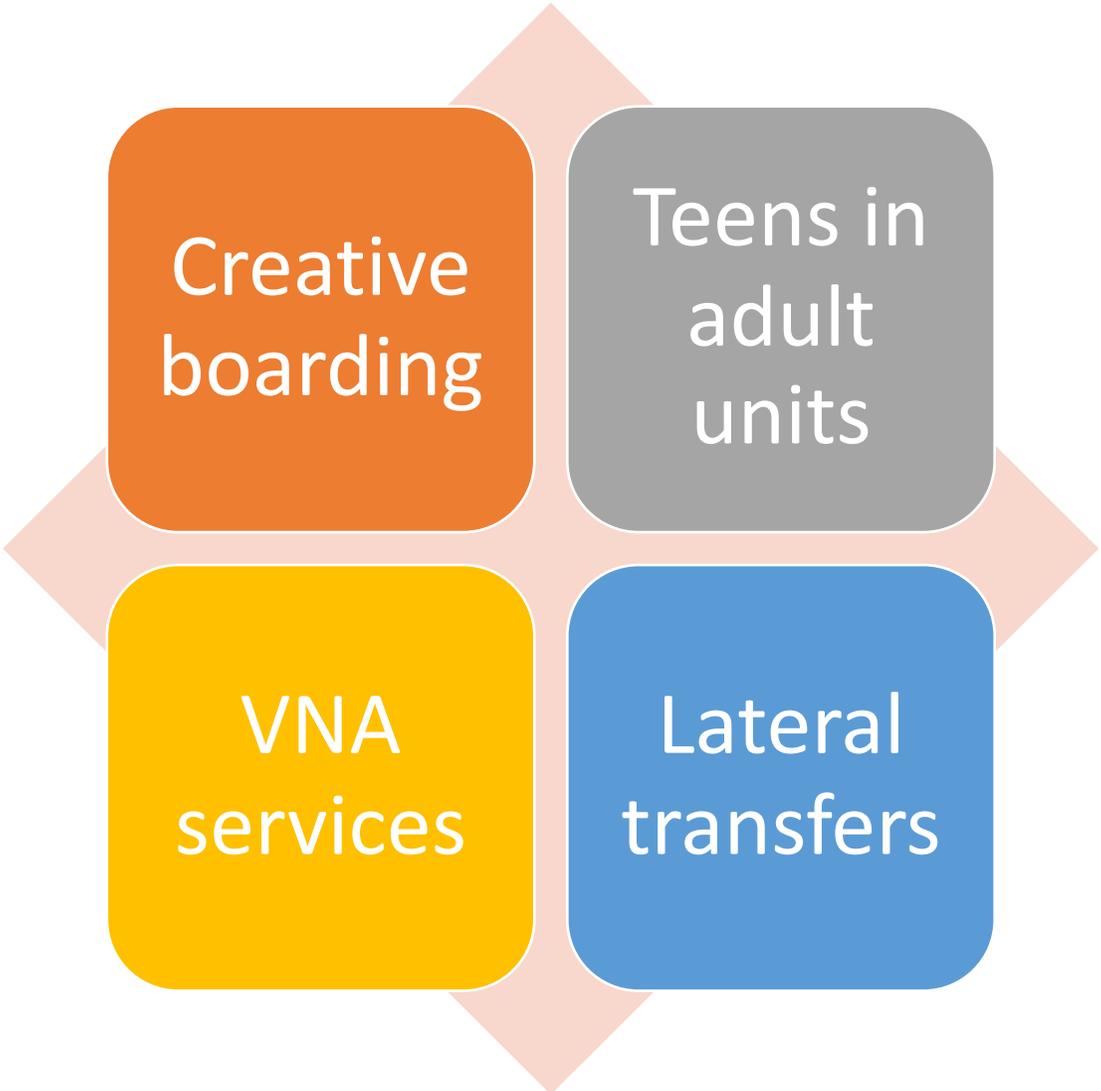


Surge Capacity Challenges

Percentage of Emergency Department Visits with Diagnosed COVID-19 in United States, by Age Group



Space



Telemedicine



Telemedicine: Emergency Department

- Emergency Care Connect: peds telemedicine: Foster et al., Acad Pediatr 2020
 - 4 EDs and 1 UCC
 - 1327 Peds contact with 202 telemedicine
71% remained locally and 25% care plan changes
 - High satisfaction
 - Barriers:
 - lack of familiarity with telemedicine
 - fears of changes in workflow
 - Reduced with strong institutional support and frequent, sustained stakeholder engagement.

Telemedicine in
the emergency
department:
an overview of
systematic
reviews Sharifi
Kia et al. 2022

- 9/18 concluded real-time video conferencing was the best method of delivery
- 8 had cost reduction as an outcome
- 6 studies found technical & infrastructure barriers
- In conclusion, despite the high potential of telemedicine systems, there is still a need for better quality of evidence in order to confirm their feasibility in the ED.

Complex teamwork

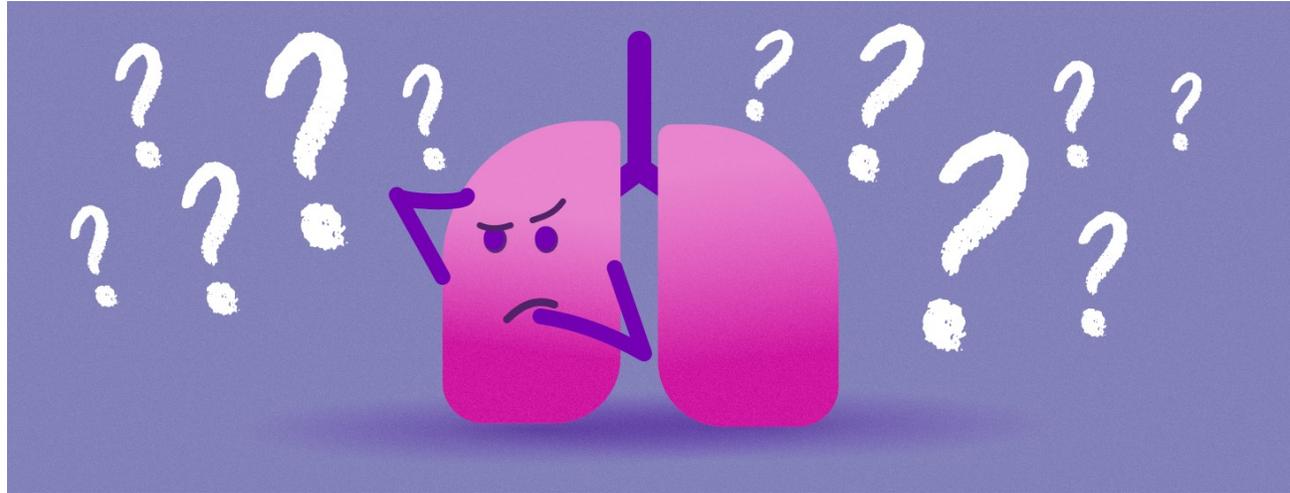
- Dept Public Health
- PCP
- ED and hospital personnel
- Nursing
- RT
- Receiving hospital
- Family
- Hospital leadership





Call to action

- Public health
 - Vaccinating the community (RSV, Flu, COVID +)
 - Prophylaxis
 - Spread mitigation
 - Education
- PCP availability
- Enhancing the community ED expertise (reduce transfer)
 - Manage sicker pts locally
 - Early consult: make plan, support care, transfer triage, telemedicine
- Staffing resources
- Flexible age limit (increase IP capacity)



- <https://www.rdhrs.org/surge-in-pediatric-patients-with-acute-respiratory-infections-resources-and-tools/>
- <https://bpb-us-e2.wpmucdn.com/sites.pedspandemicnetwork.org/dist/c/12/files/2023/04/pediatric-surge-recommendations-resources.pdf>