

Nursing Interventions for Respiratory Distress Handout

Oxygen therapy

Nurses administer supplemental oxygen to improve oxygenation and alleviate hypoxemia in patients experiencing respiratory distress. Oxygen may be delivered via nasal cannula, face mask, or non-invasive ventilation methods such as bilevel positive airway pressure (BiPAP).

Positioning

Nurses assist patients in finding comfortable positions that optimize respiratory function and promote effective breathing. Positioning techniques may include elevating the head of the bed, sitting the patient upright, or utilizing side-lying positions to enhance lung expansion and airflow.

Airway management

Nurses may need to perform airway management interventions in cases of severe respiratory distress or airway obstruction. This may involve suctioning secretions, providing nebulized bronchodilators to relieve bronchospasm, or assisting with endotracheal intubation and mechanical ventilation for patients requiring advanced airway support.

Respiratory medications

Nurses administer prescribed respiratory medications to manage underlying respiratory conditions and alleviate symptoms of respiratory distress. These medications may include bronchodilators to relieve bronchoconstriction, corticosteroids to reduce airway inflammation, or mucolytics to assist with secretion clearance.

Monitoring and assessment

Nurses monitor and assess patients with respiratory distress on an ongoing basis to evaluate treatment effectiveness and detect any changes in respiratory status. This includes regular assessments of vital signs, oxygen saturation, breath sounds, and respiratory effort. Nurses also monitor for signs of respiratory deterioration, such as increasing dyspnea or worsening oxygenation, and intervene promptly as needed.

Emotional support

Respiratory distress can be a frightening and overwhelming experience for patients. Nurses provide emotional support to help alleviate anxiety and promote relaxation, which can aid in effective breathing. This may involve teaching relaxation techniques, providing reassurance and encouragement, or simply being present and listening to the patient's concerns.

Education

Nurses play a crucial role in educating patients on respiratory health management, including proper medication use, smoking cessation strategies, and techniques for optimal breathing and lung expansion. They also teach patients how to recognize early signs of respiratory distress and when to seek medical assistance.