

# Monterey County EMS System Policy



Protocol Number: R-3  
Effective Date: 7/1/2018  
Review Date: 6/30/2021

## RESPIRATORY DISTRESS

### **BLS CARE**

Routine Medical Care.

### **ALS CARE**

Routine Medical Care.

Capnography

Oxygen – Titrate to 94-100% SpO<sub>2</sub>.

*With patients who have a history of COPD a lower baseline SpO<sub>2</sub> may be normal. Titrate to 92% as higher oxygen levels have been shown to be detrimental.*

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**For mild respiratory distress (mild wheezing/cough):**

**Albuterol 5 mg in 6 ml of NS via nebulizer.** If distress continues, may repeat as needed.

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**For moderate to severe distress (cyanosis, accessory muscle use, inability to speak > 2 syllables, severe wheezing, or SOB):**

**Albuterol 5 mg in 6 ml of NS and Atrovent 500 mcg (2.5 ml)** via nebulizer, inline assistance with CPAP, or inline assistance via BVM.

**Epinephrine 1:1,000 0.3mg IM** for severe distress and at least one of the following: ALOC, severe fatigue, inability to speak, or the O<sub>2</sub> sat remains lower than 90%. Hold if the patient has a history of coronary artery disease.

Consider using Epi 1:1000 0.15 mg IM for severe distress in elderly with a history of coronary artery disease.

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Consider the use of nebulized saline for croup symptoms.