

Chapter 8 : The Initial Assessment

The Initial Assessment

Initial assessment is the six steps in discovering and treating any life-threatening problems. 1. General impression. 2. Assessing mental status. 3. Assessing airway. 4. Assessing breathing. 5. Assessing circulation. 6. determining patient priority.

Form a General Impression

General Impression helps to determine patient priority and transport. The environment may provide a lot of information about your patient. The **Chief Complaint** is the patient's description of why you were called. A systematic approach to assessments is the best way to insure they are accurate.

Assess mental Status

Mental status or level of responsiveness is easy when patients are alert and responsive. Use **AVPU** Alert, verbal response, painful response, unresponsive. Check to see if your patient is oriented to person, place, time and event.

Assess the ABC's

Airway, Breathing, Circulation

If a Patient is alert and speaking their airway is open, if it's not open or in danger of becoming obstructed take precaution to maintain the airway, **Jaw Thrust, Head tilt-chin lift, Suction, Oral-Pharyngeal and Naso-pharyngeal airways.**

If your patient is in respiratory arrest, provide rescue breathing.

If your patient is breathing less than 8 times a minute supply **Positive Pressure Ventilations** and **100% High Flow Oxygen**

If the patient is breathing adequate but faster than 24 breaths a minute supply 100% oxygen by non-rebreather. For rapid inadequate breathing refer to chapter 6

After Breathing check pulse, no pulse = CPR.

Assess pulse, skin, and bleeding. (Rate and Quality).

Determine Priority

Priority is the decision to either transport immediately or continue on-scene assessment. You must first treat any life-threatening problems.

Any life-threatening problem can not be controlled or may reoccur, depressed level of consciousness would require an immediate transport.

Ex of Priority transports: Poor general impression, unresponsive, responsive but not following commands, difficulty breathing, shock, complicated childbirth, chest pain with systolic blood pressure less than 100mmHG, uncontrolled bleeding, severe pain anywhere.

Patient Characteristics and Initial Assessment

Characteristics and your initial assessment will vary on the Mechanism of Injury or Nature of illness. **See table 8-3 Pg 221**

Vocab

ABC's: Airway, breathing, circulation

AVPU: Alert, Verbal Response, Painful Response, Unresponsive

Chief Complaint: The reason EMS was called in Patients own words

General impression: Impression of the patients condition based on first approach

Initial assessment: Six steps for discovering and dealing with life-threatening problems

Interventions: actions taken to correct a patients problem

Mental status: Level of responsiveness

Transport Priority: immediate transport or further on scene assessment.