



**Respiratory - Airway  
BRONCHIOLITIS  
Practice Guideline**

**Patient Care Goals:**

1. Alleviate respiratory distress
2. Promptly identify respiratory distress, failure, and/or arrest, and intervene for pts who require escalation of therapy
3. Deliver appropriate therapy by differentiating other causes of pediatric respiratory distress
4. Score-Suction-Score...

**Patient Presentation:**

Inclusion Criteria

Child < age 2 with wheezing or diffuse rhonchi usually in setting of respiratory infection; may present as first time wheezing illness, although some children will have more than one case of bronchiolitis by age 2.

Exclusion Criteria

1. Anaphylaxis
2. Croup
3. Epiglottitis
4. Foreign body aspiration
5. Submersion/drowning

**Patient Management**

**Suctioning**

Frequent and aggressive  
Utilize nasal bulb syringe  
Size 8 Fr suction catheter is the gold standard for suctioning

**Medications**

**Note: DO NOT DELAY necessary respiratory support to give medications**

**Epinephrine** 1mg/ml (1:1000)

- 2.5 mg nebulized over 15 minutes
- \*ONLY FOR SEVERE BRONCHIOLITIS (Severity Score  $\geq 10$ )
- Note: nebulized epi is within paramedic scope of practice*

**Normal Saline bolus**

- 20 ml/kg IV/IO
- Repeat x 1 if no improvement

**Patient Safety Considerations**

Routine use of lights and sirens is not recommended during transport unless severe or refractory to EMS interventions

**Quality Improvement:**

- Key Documentation Elements
1. Respiratory rate, breath sounds, SPO2
  2. Use of accessory muscles
  3. Bronchiolitis Severity Score
  4. Mental status
  6. Color

Paramedic Working Assessment: Bronchiolitis

Universal Care

Consider other causes, refer to appropriate guideline

Assess  
Bronchiolitis Severity Score

Supplemental oxygen to keep saturation > 93%

Frequent aggressive suctioning,  
8 Fr suction catheter or nasal bulb syringe

Bronchiolitis Severity Score  $\geq 10$   
**SEVERE**

No

Yes

\*Nebulized Epinephrine  
Do not delay needed respiratory support  
(Suction, oxygen, BVM)

Normal saline bolus if poor perfusion  
Repeat x 1 if no improvement

Monitor patient for respiratory failure  
Prepare for BVM assistance

\*\*Bronchiolitis Severity Score on next page\*\*



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**Modified Bronchiolitis Severity Score  
(≥10 is considered **severe**)**

Bronchiolitis Severity Score	Normal (0)	Mild (1)	Moderate (2)	Severe (3)
<b>Respiratory Rate</b>	< 40	40-50	50-60	> 60
<b>SaO2% RA</b>	≥ 97	96-94	93-90	< 90
<b>General Appearance Calm/Console</b>	Calm	+ Irritable Easy to console	++ Irritable Difficult to console	+++ Irritable Unable to console
<b>Retractions (SS, IC, SC) Nasal Flaring (NF)</b>	None	Subcostal	Intercostal	Supraclavicular, Suprasternal, or Paradoxical
<b>Auscultation</b>	Clear	<b>Scattered end</b> expiratory wheeze or crackles	<b>Diffuse</b> expiratory wheeze or crackles	<b>Ins/Exp</b> wheeze or crackles; poor air movement; grunting