



Cardiovascular
CONGESTIVE HEART FAILURE
 Practice Guideline

Patient Care Goals:

1. Recognize and alleviate respiratory distress
2. Provide effective oxygenation and ventilation
3. Monitor vital signs and cardiac rhythm
4. Administer appropriate medications
5. Provide coaching when needed for agitated patients

Patient Presentation:

Inclusion Criteria

1. Signs of severe respiratory distress
2. Signs of pulmonary edema
note: may present as wheezing
3. Restlessness and anxiety

Patient Management:

*Nitroglycerin

0.4 mg SL, can repeat q 3 minutes as long as SBP greater than 90 mmHg

** Aggressive Nitroglycerin

1.2 mg SL initial dose; can repeat 0.4 mg SL q 3 minutes as long as SBP greater than 90 mmHg

Avoid nitro in patients with phosphodiesterase inhibitor use within the past 48 hours
 Fluid bolus 250ml may be administered for hypotensive CHF patients

CPAP for normotensive or hypertensive patients in moderate to severe distress; consider PEEP

Patient Safety Considerations:

1. Chest pain
2. Observe for signs of clinical deterioration: chest pain, decreased LOC/syncope, decreasing SPO₂, dysrhythmias
3. Prior CHF history not required
4. Ongoing assessment is critical
5. Pt's may have difficulty accepting CPAP mask; **coaching is key!**
6. Be prepared to provide ventilations or compressions

Quality Improvement:

Key Documentation Elements

1. Level of distress, SPO₂
2. Associated signs/symptoms
3. 12 Lead acquisition time and interpretation
4. Time of medication, CPAP, fluids given—or reason not given
5. Narrative documentation of medical decision making for interventions

