

NeuroTrace Academy Study Guide

Category: Medical Terminology

Topic: Emergency & Clinical Syndromes

Style: Definition-based, exam-oriented, urgency-focused

1. Core Principles (Must Know)

Emergency Recognition


- **Life-threatening conditions require immediate recognition**
- **Symptoms indicate severity**
- **Associations help identify causes**
- **Age groups matter for certain conditions**


Key Principle

- **Rapid recognition of emergencies prevents poor outcomes**
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2. Life-Threatening Emergencies

Anaphylactic Shock

- **Definition:** A life-threatening allergic reaction resulting in difficulty breathing and low blood pressure
- **Features:**
 - Allergic reaction
 - Breathing difficulty
 - Hypotension (low blood pressure)
 - Life-threatening
- **Treatment:** Immediate epinephrine
-  **Key:** Allergy + hypotension + breathing = anaphylactic shock

 **Exam Trap:** Life-threatening - requires immediate treatment

Retinal Artery Occlusion


- **Definition:** Obstruction of an artery that supplies blood to the retina, resulting in some degree of temporary or permanent blindness
 - **Presentation:**
 - Sudden, painless, severe vision loss
 - "Curtain coming down" sensation
 - **Type:** Ophthalmologic emergency
 -  **Key:** Sudden + painless + severe = retinal artery occlusion (emergency)
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Apnea

- **Definition:** A possibly life-threatening condition in which breathing stops, for either a short or long period of time
- **Types:**
 - Sleep apnea
 - Central apnea
 - Obstructive apnea
- **Severity:** Life-threatening


-  **Key:** Complete cessation = life-threatening
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Asphyxia


- **Definition:** The medical term for suffocation that can be caused by choking on an object, lack of oxygen in the air, or chemicals such as carbon monoxide which reduce the amount of oxygen in the blood
 - **Causes:**
 - Choking
 - Low oxygen in air
 - Chemical poisoning (CO)
 - **Severity:** Life-threatening
 -  **Key:** Suffocation = life-threatening
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3. Clinical Syndromes


Migraine

- **Definition:** A severe headache usually accompanied by vision problems and/or nausea and vomiting, typically recurs
 - **Features:**
 - Recurrent (episodic pattern)
 - Visual aura
 - Nausea/vomiting
 - Severe headache
 -  **Key:** Recurrent + aura + nausea = migraine
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Raynaud's Disease

- **Definition:** A condition in which the fingers and toes become pale when exposed to cold or emotional stress, due to sudden narrowing of the arteries that supply them with blood
 - **Features:**
 - Vasospastic disorder
 - Triggered by cold or emotional stress
 - Color changes: white → blue → red
 - Fingers and toes
 -  **Key:** Cold + digits pale = Raynaud's disease
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Reye's Syndrome

- **Definition:** A rare disorder mainly affecting those under age 15, characterized by brain and liver damage following a viral infection such as chickenpox or flu, and may be linked to taking aspirin
- **Features:**
 - Age: <15 years (children)
 - Brain + liver damage
 - Post-viral (chickenpox, flu)
 - Aspirin association
-  **Key:** Child + aspirin + viral = Reye's syndrome

 **Exam Trap:** AVOID aspirin in children with viral illness

4. Ethics & Procedures

Informed Consent

- **Definition:** An agreement to undergo a medical procedure after the technique, its risks, and its possible complications have been explained
 - **Requirements:**
 - Procedure explanation
 - Risks explained
 - Complications explained
 - Agreement before procedure
 - **Applies to:** All medical procedures (not just surgery)
 -  **Key:** Procedure + risks explained = informed consent
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5. High-Yield Exam Discrimination Table

Condition	Severity	Key Feature	Urgency
Anaphylactic shock	Life-threatening	Allergy + hypotension	Immediate
Retinal artery occlusion	Emergency	Sudden vision loss	Immediate
Apnea	Life-threatening	Breathing stops	Immediate
Asphyxia	Life-threatening	Suffocation	Immediate
Migraine	Variable	Recurrent + aura	Non-emergent
Raynaud's	Variable	Cold-induced vasospasm	Non-emergent
Reye's	Serious	Child + aspirin + virus	Urgent

6. ABRET Exam Pearls

Critical Distinctions

1. **Life-threatening emergencies:** Anaphylaxis, retinal occlusion, apnea, asphyxia
2. **Reye's syndrome:** Child + aspirin + viral (AVOID aspirin in children)
3. **Migraine:** Recurrent pattern (not single episode)
4. **Informed consent:** Applies to all procedures, not just surgery

Common Exam Traps

- Missing life-threatening nature of certain conditions
 - Forgetting Reye's syndrome aspirin association (critical for prevention)
 - Confusing single headache with migraine (recurrence is key)
 - Thinking informed consent only applies to surgery
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7. Quick Reference Summary

Must-Know Emergencies

- **Anaphylactic shock:** Allergy + hypotension + breathing
- **Retinal artery occlusion:** Sudden + painless + vision loss
- **Apnea:** Complete breathing cessation

- **Asphyxia:** Suffocation

Must-Know Clinical Syndromes

- **Migraine:** Recurrent + aura + nausea
- **Raynaud's:** Cold + digits pale
- **Reye's:** Child + aspirin + viral

Must-Know Ethics

- **Informed consent:** Procedure + risks explained

Memory Anchors

- Anaphylaxis = allergy + shock (think "ana" = "against" = allergic)
- Reye's = child + aspirin (think "Reye's" = "restrict" aspirin in kids)
- Migraine = recurrent (think "migraine" = "migrates" = comes and goes)

Next Steps:

- Memorize life-threatening emergencies
- Learn Reye's syndrome prevention (no aspirin in children)
- Understand informed consent requirements
- Practice recognizing urgency levels