


Section: BLS Medical Care – Standing Orders  
Subject: BLS DIFFICULTY IN BREATHING  
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1. Basic BLS Treatments
2. Oxygen (O<sub>2</sub>):
  - a. If patient has adequate respiratory rate and adequate tidal volume then :
    - i. Nasal Cannula @ 2 lpm (patient skin is warm, dry, and of good color)
    - ii. Non-Rebreather Mask @ 15 lpm (patient cyanotic, ashen, skin cool/moist)
  - b. If in doubt, use the NRBM with high flow O<sub>2</sub>
  - c. DO NOT withhold high flow O<sub>2</sub> from COPD patients complaining of shortness of breath
3. Closely assess the patient's lung sounds and be ready to provide findings to arriving ALS members
4. Pediatric patients with signs and symptoms of croup or epiglottitis:
  - a. Administer blow-by oxygen
  - b. Allow the patient to stay with the parent or caretaker if by doing so you reduce anxiety
  - c. Keep the child in the sitting position
  - d. Keep the child calm
  - e. Rapid transport
5. ALS evaluation and transport criteria:
  - a. All patients complaining of shortness of breath shall have a paramedic evaluation and be transported ALS
6. QA points:
  - a. Shortness of breath can be the only presenting complaint in the following conditions:
    - i. cardiac ischemia
    - ii. significant anemia
    - iii. metabolic acidosis
    - iv. new onset renal failure
    - v. pulmonary embolism
    - vi. sepsis