

AirLink CCT

Open Pneumothorax Procedure

Objectives:

1. Maintain adequate ventilation
2. Maintain hemodynamic status
3. Prevent and minimize contamination of the chest cavity

History:

1. Mechanism of injury
2. Time of injury
3. Previous treatment

Assessment:

1. See General Trauma Guidelines
2. Locate the wound. Inspect the entire thorax including the patients back side.
3. Inspect for sucking action, bubbles at the wound site and subcutaneous emphysema.
4. Closely monitor breath sounds, chest expansion and work of breathing.

Management:

1. See General Trauma Guidelines
2. O2 via NRM mask or intubate as necessary
3. An occlusive dressing taped on three sides should be used as a one way valve.
4. Monitor for the development of a tension pneumothorax (see Tension pneumothorax/ Chest dart protocol).
5. Do not remove impaled objects.

References:

1. Emergent Management of Trauma, Third Edition. 2011
2. Essential Emergency Trauma, 2011
3. Trauma, Seventh Edition. 2013