

## Recognizing Respiratory Problems Flowchart

PALS: Signs of respiratory problems					
Clinical signs		Upper airway obstruction	Lower airway obstruction	Lung tissue disease	Disordered control of breathing
<b>Airway</b>	Patency	Airway open and maintainable/not maintainable			
<b>Breathing</b>	Respiratory rate/effort	Increased			Variable
	Breath sounds	Stridor (typically inspiratory)	Barking cough Hoarseness Wheezing (typically expiratory) Prolonged expiratory phase	Grunting Crackles Decreased breath sounds	Normal
	Air movement	Decreased			Variable
<b>Circulation</b>	Heart rate	Tachycardia (early); bradycardia (late)			
	Skin	Pallor, cool skin (early); cyanosis (late)			
<b>Disability</b>	Level of consciousness	Anxiety, agitation (early); lethargy, unresponsiveness (late)			
<b>Exposure</b>	Temperature	Variable			
PALS: Identifying respiratory problems by severity					
Progression of respiratory distress to respiratory failure*					
<b>Airway</b>	Respiratory distress: open and maintainable Respiratory failure: not maintainable				
<b>Breathing</b>	Respiratory distress: tachypnea Respiratory failure: bradypnea to apnea				
	Respiratory distress: work of breathing (nasal flaring/retractions) Respiratory failure: increased effort progresses to decreased effort and then to apnea				
	Respiratory distress: good air movement Respiratory failure: poor to absent air movement				
<b>Circulation</b>	Respiratory distress: tachycardia Respiratory failure: bradycardia				
	Respiratory distress: pallor Respiratory failure: cyanosis				
<b>Disability</b>	Respiratory distress: anxiety, agitation Respiratory failure: lethargy to unresponsiveness				
<b>Exposure</b>	Variable temperature				

\*Respiratory failure requires immediate intervention.