

## Summary: Recognizing Respiratory Problems

This section summarizes the recognition and identification of respiratory problems. This summary does not include all respiratory emergencies but instead provides key characteristics for a limited number of diseases.

### Upper Airway Obstruction

- Airway: patent airway open and maintainable/not maintainable
- Breathing:
  - Respiratory rate/effort increased
  - Breath sounds:
    - Stridor (typically inspiratory)
    - Barking cough
    - Hoarseness
    - Change in pitch or cry
  - Decreased air movement
- Circulation:
  - Heart rate: tachycardia (early); bradycardia (late)
  - Skin: pallor, cool skin (early); cyanosis (late)
- Disability: level of consciousness: anxiety, agitation (early); lethargy, unresponsiveness (late)
- Exposure: variable temperature

### Lower Airway Obstruction

- Airway: patent airway open and maintainable/not maintainable
- Breathing:
  - Respiratory rate/effort increased
  - Breath sounds:
    - Wheezing (typically expiratory)
    - Prolonged expiratory phase
  - Decreased air movement
- Circulation:
  - Heart rate: tachycardia (early); bradycardia (late)
  - Skin: pallor, cool skin (early); cyanosis (late)
- Disability: level of consciousness: anxiety, agitation (early); lethargy, unresponsiveness (late)
- Exposure: variable temperature

### Lung Tissue Disease

- Airway: patent airway open and maintainable/not maintainable
- Breathing:
  - Respiratory rate/effort increased
  - Breath sounds:
    - Grunting
    - Crackles
    - Decreased breath sounds
  - Decreased air movement
- Circulation:
  - Heart rate: tachycardia (early); bradycardia (late)
  - Skin: pallor, cool skin (early); cyanosis (late)
- Disability: level of consciousness: anxiety, agitation (early); lethargy, unresponsiveness (late)
- Exposure: variable temperature

## Disordered Control of Breathing

- Airway: patent airway open and maintainable/not maintainable
- Breathing:
  - Variable respiratory rate/effort
  - Normal breath sounds
  - Variable air movement
- Circulation:
  - Heart rate: tachycardia (early); bradycardia (late)
  - Skin: pallor, cool skin (early); cyanosis (late)
- Disability: level of consciousness: anxiety, agitation (early); lethargy, unresponsiveness (late)
- Exposure: variable temperature