ED OBSERVATION UNIT:
COPD EXACERBATION PROTOCOL
NYC H+H KINGS COUNTY HOSPITAL CENTER

General Observation Guidelines apply for all ED observation patients.

INCLUSION CRITERIA	*EXCLUSION CRITERIA*

• Previous history of COPD
• Initial therapy given in ED (nebulizers, steroids) with improvement
• No acute process on chest X-ray
	• New onset COPD
	• Concurrent acute comorbidities - pneumonia, CHF, cardiac ischemia
	• Unstable clinical condition or unstable VS
	• Poor response to initial therapy
	• Evidence of CO2 narcosis
	• Factors precluding discharge in <48 hours
	• Need for NIPPV manifested by at least one of:
	  ○ Respiratory acidosis (pH < 7.3)
	  ○ Persistent hypoxemia refractory to supplemental oxygen
	  ○ Severe dyspnea with signs of respiratory muscle fatigue, increased WOB, RR> 30.

INTERVENTIONS	*OPTIONAL INTERVENTIONS*

• Serial treatments:
  ○ B-agonists q2-4 hrs
  ○ Ipatropium q6h
  ○ IV or PO Corticosteroids
• Serial VS and Serial exams every 2-4-6 hours
• Pulse Oximetry (stationary or ambulatory), ABG if indicated
• Supplemental oxygen as indicated
• Asthma/MDI teaching/Smoking cessation
	• Prophylactic antibiotics
	• Magnesium sulfate
	• Chest X-ray Imaging
	• Arterial blood gas
	• Serial peak flow measurements
	• Cardiac monitoring as needed

Last updated 10/16/2020
Authored by R. Balakrishnan MD
Reviewed by W. Chan, R. Allen MD, E. Madden MD, R. Balakrishnan MD, S. Brewster MD

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DISPOSITION	
Home: ● Bronchodilator nebulizer requirement ≥ every 4 hours ● Major resolution of dyspnea/wheezing ● Ambulating comfortably ● Ambulatory Oxygen > 90% on RA or at baseline home FiO2 ● Adequate follow-up plan (<4 weeks after discharge) with PCP or pulmonologist	**Admission:** ● Clinical deterioration ● Unstable VS ● Lack of improvement ● RR>30 after >8 hours of treatment ● Another acute process becomes evident (Pneumonia, CHF) ● Uncompensated pCO2 retention ● Ambulatory SpO2 < 90% on RA or <90% at baseline home FiO2 ● Evidence of altered mentation

Source

1. 2019 Global Strategy - GOLD Main Report. https://goldcopd.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/GOLD-2019-v1.7-FINAL-14Nov2018-WMS.pdf

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