



# AIRWAY OBSTRUCTION

## Escambia County, Florida - ALS/BLS Medical Protocol

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Causes of upper airway obstruction include the tongue, foreign bodies, swelling of the upper airway due to angio-neurotic edema, [Allergic Reactions/Anaphylaxis](#), and trauma to the airway.

Differentiation of the cause of upper airway obstruction is essential to determining the proper treatment.

### Supportive Care

1. [Medical Supportive Care Protocol](#).
2. If air exchange is inadequate and there is a reasonable suspicion of foreign body airway obstruction (FBAO), apply [abdominal thrusts](#) (a).

### ALS Level 1

2. If unable to relieve FBAO, visualize with laryngoscope and extract foreign body with Magill forceps.
3. If obstruction is due to trauma and/or edema, or if uncontrollable bleeding into the airway causes life-threatening ventilatory impairment, perform [endotracheal intubation](#).
4. If unable to intubate and patient cannot be adequately ventilated by other means, perform [cricothyroidotomy](#).
6. If patient becomes unconscious, immediately check for a pulse. If pulseless begin CPR.

### ALS Level 2 (*Physician Authorization Required*)

None



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### Note

- (a) If air exchange is adequate with a partial airway obstruction, do not encourage patient to cough up obstruction.

Continue to monitor for adequacy of air exchange.

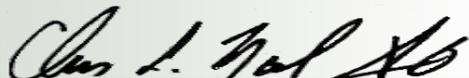
If air exchange becomes inadequate continue with protocol.



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