



PEDIATRIC NEAR DROWNING



Escambia County, Florida - ALS/BLS Medical Protocol

Near drowning patients are those that have been submerged in fresh or salt water and may or may not be conscious.

If the patient is still in open water on arrival of EMS, a Dive Rescue Team should be utilized to remove the patient from the water whenever possible.

Additional protocols may be needed for treatment decisions.

Supportive Care

1. [Trauma Supportive Care Protocol](#) (protect C-spine) (a).
2. Determine pertinent history (duration of submersion, depth, water temperature, possible seizure, drug and/or alcohol use, possible trauma).
3. Maintain body temperature, dry and warm patient.
4. **All near drowning patients should be transported to the hospital, regardless of how well they may seem to have recovered. Delayed death or complications due to pulmonary edema or aspiration pneumonia are not uncommon.** The most devastating injury is due to asphyxia.

ALS Level 1

5. Treat dysrhythmias per specific protocol.
6. Consider [Nasogastric Tube](#) (b).

ALS Level 2 (*Physician Authorization Required*)

None



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Notes

- (a) The routine use of abdominal thrusts for near-drowning victims is not recommended. This maneuver should only be used in cases of FBAO.
- (b) Any near-drowning patient with a decreased ability to protect their airway, with gross abdominal distension, or who requires ventilatory assistance needs an NG tube.



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