

Trauma Critical Thinking



Critical Thinking:
Signs of shock may include (but are not limited to):

1. Absence of radial/femoral pulse
2. Pale, cool clammy skin
3. Exsanguinating hemorrhage
4. Adult BP <90mmhg
5. Tachycardia
6. Altered LOC
7. Tachypnea
8. Delayed Capillary refill
9. Confusion
10. Restlessness
11. Combativeness

Note: Vital signs may not be reliable in populations with extremes of age and certain medications.

Conditions that may include impending shock:
 Significant mechanism of injury
 Tender and or distended abdomen
 Pelvic instability
 Bilateral femur fracture

Conditions that result in possible inadequate breathing:
 Large open chest wound (sucking chest wound)
 Large flail chest
 Tension pneumothorax
 Major blunt chest trauma

Be aware of the potentially life threatening conditions:

- Airway obstruction
- Flail chest
- Open pneumothorax
- Massive hemothorax
- Tension pneumothorax
- Cardiac tamponade
- Myocardial contusion
- Traumatic aortic rupture
- Tracheal or bronchial tree injury
- Diaphragmatic tears
- Pulmonary contusion
- Blast injuries

LOAD AND GO CRITERIA:
 Head injury with unconsciousness, unequal pupils or decreasing level of consciousness. (GCS ≤ 10)

Ongoing airway obstruction that cannot be quickly relieved by mechanical methods such as suction or positioning

Traumatic arrest (refer to traumatic arrest guideline)

Shock or symptoms that may lead to shock:
 BP <90mmHg
 Carotid pulse present with radial and/ or femoral pulse absent

BP > 90mmHg with other signs and symptoms present of shock

Suspected Head Injury (traumatic brain injury):
 The unstable injured patient constitutes a “LOAD AND GO” situation following the Primary Survey/Initial Assessment. Signs and symptoms of elevated ICP:

1. Head injury with unilaterally dilated pupil or unequal pupils
(CALL MED CONTROL IF THIS IS COMBINED WITH ANY LOSS OF CONSCIOUSNESS)
2. Head injury with rapidly decreasing level of consciousness
3. Increased SBP
4. Decreased heart rate
5. Nausea and vomiting
6. Altered level of consciousness GCS <10
7. Posturing
8. Seizures
9. Abnormal respiratory pattern