

Drowning

History

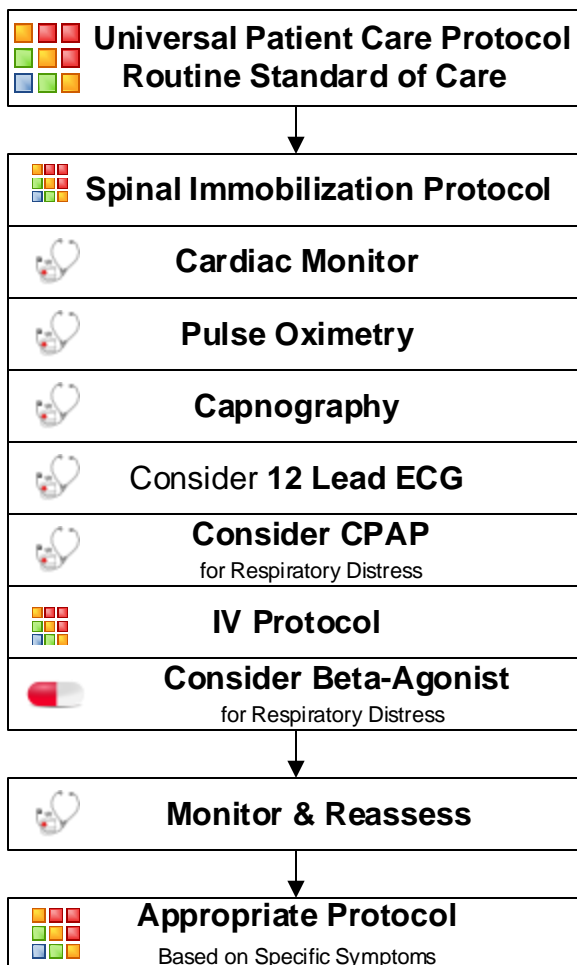
- **SAMPLE**
- Submersion in water regardless of depth
- Possible trauma to C-spine
- Possible history of trauma ie: diving board
- Duration of immersion
- Temperature of water or possibility of hypothermia

Signs and Symptoms

- Unresponsive
- Mental status changes
- Decreased or absent vital signs
- Vomiting
- Coughing
- Apnea
- Stridor
- Wheezing
- Rales/Aspiration

Differential

- Trauma
- Pre-existing medical problem
- Pressure injury (diving)
 - Barotrauma
 - Decompression sickness
- Post-immersion syndrome



Trauma Protocols

Pearls

- **Recommended Exam: Trauma Survey, Head, Neck, Chest, Abdomen, Pelvis, Back, Extremities, Skin, Neuro**
- Have a high index of suspicion for possible spinal injuries
- With cold water no time limit -- resuscitate all. These patients have an increased chance of survival.
- **Some patients may develop delayed respiratory distress.**
- All victims should be transported for evaluation due to potential for worsening over the next several hours.
- **Drowning is a leading cause of death among would-be rescuers.**
- **Allow appropriately trained and certified rescuers to remove victims from areas of danger.**
- With pressure injuries (decompression / barotrauma), consider transport to or availability of a hyperbaric chamber.