MANAGEMENT OF ACUTE SUBMERSION INJURY
CLINICAL PRACTICE GUIDELINE FOR URGENT CARE

INCLUSION
Any child who has/had respiratory impairment (including but not limited to) difficulty breathing, sustained/prolonged cough, grunting or color change in association with a submersion event.

EXCLUSION
- Altered Consciousness
- Hemodynamically Unstable

CONTINUE TO MONITOR
- Cardiac Monitoring
- Monitor O2 Saturations
- Monitor Respiratory Status

Has It Been 6 Hours Since the Event?

YES
Provide Water Safety Teaching Sheet and Discharge Home

NO
Consider Observation In Urgent Care If It Has Been Almost 6 Hours Since The Event and If Feasible

MONITORING
- Cardiac & Respiratory Monitoring
- Continuous Pulse Ox Monitoring

Normal Respiratory Exam?

YES
If At Any Time There Is Deterioration In Respiratory Exam Or Need For Oxygen

NO
Antibiotics Not Indicated Within the First 24-48 Hours Unless Submersion Occurred in Sewer Water, Grossly Muddy Water, or Stagnant Lake Water.

Obtain Chest X-Ray

Provide Respiratory Support As Needed To Maintain Sats ≥94% And Transfer Or Direct Admit To Hospital As Appropriate

1 Abnormal Respiratory Exam
- Rales/Crackles On Auscultation In Some Or All Fields
- Hypoxia With Pulse Ox <94% On RA AND/OR
- Signs/symptoms Respiratory Distress

2 Transfer Criteria
Abnormal Respiratory Exam, Abnormal Chest X-Ray & Or Need For Additional Monitoring
- If CHOA Transport Available:
  - Contact Transfer Center For Possible Direct Admission
- If CHOA Transport NOT Available:
  - Transfer To ED

3 Discharge Criteria
- Normal Respiratory Exam
- O2 Sats ≥94% On RA
- Patient/Family Water Safety Education Complete: Krames "Nonfatal Drowning (Submersion Injury)" Teaching Sheet

Key Goals
DECREASE:
- Use of Antibiotics
- # of Chest X-rays

Evidence Indicates That For a Child With a Normal Respiratory Exam, a Routine Chest X-Ray Is NOT Indicated

Developed through the efforts of Children's Healthcare of Atlanta and physicians on Children’s medical staff in the interest of advancing pediatric healthcare. This is a general guideline and does not represent a professional care standard governing providers’ obligation to patients. Ultimately the patient's physician must determine the most appropriate care. © 2020 Children's Healthcare of Atlanta, Inc.