

## APPARENT LIFE-THREATENING EVENT (ALTE)

### **DEFINITION:**

An Apparent Life-Threatening Event (ALTE) is defined as an episode that is frightening to the observer and is characterized by some combination of:

- Apnea (central or obstructive)
- Color change (cyanosis, pallor, erythema)
- Marked change in muscle tone
- Unexplained choking or gagging

### **INCIDENCE:**

The incidence of ALTE episodes for the general infant population is reported to vary between 0.5% and 6%. Although it usually occurs in infants <12 months old, any child under 24 months who experiences any of the above may be considered at risk for an ALTE episode.

### **CONDITIONS RESPONSIBLE FOR ALTE:**

A wide variety of illnesses and etiologies are associated with an ALTE episode. These include:

- |                             |                                |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Airway disease              | Cardiac arrhythmias /anomalies |
| Child abuse                 | Gastroesophageal reflux        |
| Infantile botulism          | Infections                     |
| Inborn errors of metabolism | Intracranial hemorrhage        |
| Meningitis                  | "Near-miss" SIDS               |
| Pertussis (whooping cough)  | Respiratory syncytial virus    |
| Seizure                     | Sepsis                         |

### **ACTION/TREATMENT:**

- ABCs; consider use of the Pediatric Assessment Triangle (see I-25).
- If needed: IV access, rate titrated to perfusion as needed.
- Leave the child in caretaker's arm in position of comfort.
- Provide blow-by oxygen as tolerated; perform pulse oximetry for reported apneic events.
- Check cardiac rhythm on monitor.
- Refer to appropriate treatment protocols for specific intervention.

### **TRANSPORT:**

- Transport to nearest appropriate facility:
  - ALS transport, if child is symptomatic
  - BLS transport, if child is asymptomatic
  - Private transport acceptable for asymptomatic patients **IF**:
    - ♦ Transportation is available now
    - ♦ The parents / caretaker are reliable
    - ♦ Parents / caretaker understand the importance of evaluation

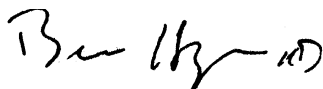
### **NOTE:**

- If the parent/caretaker refuses medical care and/or transport, contact the base hospital prior to completing a Refusal of Care form.

Boxed text indicates BH order

Unboxed text indicates standing order

Approved:



Treatment Guidelines:Obstetrics:P-15  
Implementation Date: 7/31/06