

SUCTIONING

NOTE: If the patient has secretions or emesis that cannot be removed quickly and easily by suctioning, the patient should be log rolled and the oropharynx should be cleared

- Take Body Substance Isolation precautions.
- Assemble and Check the equipment
Assure a tight fit on all of the hoses. Connect a rigid tip catheter to the hose, turn on the machine and check the vacuum.
- Measure the suction catheter
Measure the catheter in the same manner as the OPA. The length of catheter that should be inserted into the patient's mouth is equal to the distance between the corner of the patient's mouth and their earlobe *or* center of the mouth to the angle of the jaw
- Hyperventilate the patient if necessary
If the patient is being artificially ventilated and is producing "frothy" secretions as quickly as you can suction them from the airway you may alternate hyperventilation with suctioning. Alternating suctioning for 15 seconds with 2 minutes of hyperventilation. However, note that hyperventilation and/or artificial ventilations is not appropriate if vomitus or other particles are present in the airway. ***Remember the patient will not be receiving oxygen while you are suctioning.***
- Open the mouth
The mouth should be opened using the "crossed or scissors" finger technique.
- Insert the suction tip
The rigid tip catheter must be inserted following the pharyngeal curvature, with the suction OFF (usually there is a control hole on the tip, if not you will need to crimp the suction hose to initiate suctioning). Insert the catheter only as far as you properly measured it.
- Suction the mouth while retracting
After inserting the catheter the measured distance initiate suctioning as you retract the catheter in a sweeping motion.
- Do not suction too long!
The maximum suction time should only be 15 seconds.
- Oxygenate
After suctioning, re-oxygenate the patient. If the patient is being artificially ventilated and needs to be suctioned again, you should continue to ventilate the patient for two minutes and then suction again, if needed, for up to 15 seconds and continue in this manner.
- Clean the catheter
If necessary, rinse the catheter and tubing with water to prevent obstructions of the tubing and catheter. A thorough cleaning of the equipment should be done as soon as possible after you arrive at the hospital.