

# Nasopharyngeal Airway

Nasopharyngeal airways are used to assist airway patency. They are used in conscious/semi-conscious paediatric patients, where oropharyngeal airways are not possible due to gagging or induced vomiting. Nasopharyngeal airways are contraindicated in a patient with a suspected base of skull fracture.

1

## GATHER EQUIPMENT

Gather equipment pictured below



2

## PREPARE

Attend to hand hygiene and don PPE



3

## PROCEDURE

Position the child appropriately to access the nose



4

Measure the depth of insertion, from the tip of the nose to the tragus of the ear. The width of the tube should be no wider than the patient's little finger.



5

Apply lubricant to the outside of the NPA



6

Insert the NPA gently into the nasal passage to the predetermined length. A slight rotational movement can be used to assist with insertion.



## 7

The correct size should sit flush against the nares, causing no blanching to the skin. Document the size of NPA used and reassess its effectiveness. If the patient had an oxygen mask on prior to procedure then re-apply oxygen as required.

**ALERT**

Nasopharyngeal airways are contraindicated in a patient with a suspected base of skull fracture.

Seek prompt senior nursing/medical advice for assistance in paediatric airway management.

**Tips in children**

- Coughing or gagging may indicate the NPA has been inserted too far.
- Infants and children have narrower airways that can easily be obstructed. Ensure the NPA does not become blocked by lubricant or secretions.

**For further information:**

[Clinical Assessment of the Paediatric Patient – Rapid Assessment / Primary and Secondary Survey / Vital Signs \(QH only\)](#)

**Video:**

[Core Nasopharyngeal Airway Insertion](#)

**References:**

This Queensland Paediatric Emergency Nursing Skill Sheet was developed by the Emergency Care of Children working group (funded by the Queensland Emergency Department Strategic Advisory Panel) with the help of the following resources:

Group., A.P.L.S., Advanced Paediatric Life Support. 5th ed. 2011, London: Wiley-Blackwell.

15. Kliegman, R., Stanton, B., Geme, J., Schor, N. & Behrman, R., Nelsons Textbook of Pediatrics. 20th ed. 2016, Philadelphia: Saunders Elsevier.

Queensland Health State wide ED Nurse Educator Committee, Pearson, N., Cole, T., & Carney, S. (Eds.). (2016). Unit 5 Respiratory. In Queensland Health: Transition Support Program - Emergency. Module 3 - Paediatric Care in the Emergency Department (4th ed., pp. 65–67). State of Queensland (Queensland Health).



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- Advising consumers of their choices in an environment that is culturally appropriate and which enables comfortable and confidential discussion. This includes the use of interpreter services where necessary.
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