Smoke Inhalation Treatment

Self-Care at Home

Remove the person with smoke inhalation from the scene to a location with clean air. Make sure that you are not putting yourself in danger before you attempt to pull someone from a smoke-filled environment. If you would be taking a serious risk to help the person, wait for trained professionals to arrive at the scene. If necessary, CPR should be initiated by trained bystanders until emergency medical help arrives.

Medical Treatment

A number of treatments may be given for smoke inhalation.

- Oxygen
  - Oxygen is the mainstay of treatment.
  - Oxygen may be applied with a nose tube, mask, or through a tube down the throat.
  - If the patient has signs and symptoms of upper airway problems (hoarseness), they will most likely be intubated. The doctor places a tube down the throat to keep the airway from closing due to swelling.
  - If the patient has respiratory distress or mental status changes, they may also be intubated to let the staff help with breathing, to suction off mucus, and keep the patient from choking on secretions.

- Bronchoscopy
  - Bronchoscopy is procedure performed through a small scope to directly look at the degree of damage done to the airways and to allow for suctioning of secretions and debris.
• Usually bronchoscopy is done through an endotracheal tube after the patient receives adequate sedation and pain relievers.
• Bronchoscopy may be necessary if the patient has growing respiratory failure, fails to demonstrate clinical improvement, or a segment of the lung remains collapsed.

• Hyperbaric oxygenation (HBO)
  • If the patient has carbon monoxide poisoning, hyperbaric oxygenation may be considered.
  • Hyperbaric oxygenation is a treatment in which the patient is given oxygen in a compression chamber.
  • Some studies have demonstrated that hyperbaric oxygenation causes a reduction in symptoms of the nervous system, and if the patient has carbon monoxide poisoning, it may make recovery quicker.
  • The indications for and availability of this treatment vary depending on the institution and the region in which the patient is hospitalized.

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WebMD Medical Reference from eMedicineHealth
Reviewed by Melissa Conrad Stöppler, MD on October 18, 2007
Last updated: October 18, 2007
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