



Nursing Points Study Guide

General overview of shock



There are different types of shock. This study guide details an overview of shock itself. Each type of shock will have its own study guide.

Points to remember for shock.

Shock is a failure of the pump due to multiple possible problems.

First and foremost we need to get the circulation resumed throughout the body to perfuse all of the organs.



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Follow the ABCs – airway, breathing, circulation except if someone is massively hemorrhaging then quickly apply pressure to decrease or stop the bleeding and go to airway and breathing.

Applying oxygen is not enough --- you must make sure the airway is patent and that oxygen is going where it should.

If you suspect someone is in shock – regardless of the current pulse oximeter reading, apply oxygen, it will be needed.

Put in solid large bore intravenous lines, at least two in case one fails, and give fluids.

You will have hypotension with shock.

Decreased mental status will be present the further into shock the person goes because you have decreased circulation and as a result decreased function to all organs including the brain.

Hands and feet will be cold, decreased pulses and they may appear cyanotic due to decreased blood flow to the extremities. When in a shock situation the body attempts to save itself at all costs and the extremities are considered expendable. Therefore, blood is shunted from the extremities to the vital organs.

There will be a weak and rapid pulse because the heart is attempting to increase circulation by working more.

There will be a decreased urine output due to decreased circulation to the kidneys.

The GI system will not be functioning well due to decreased circulation and food and liquids will just sit in the stomach and not digest, but will increase the chances of aspiration as the person becomes confused and lethargic due to decreased blood supply to the brain. **DO NOT GIVE ANYTHING BY MOUTH IN A SHOCK SITUATION.**



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Overall, we have interventions to do but we must find the cause of the shock, otherwise we are just putting a Band-Aid on the problem and not taking care of the cause. Band-Aids are good but only temporarily.

The problem could be distributive shock due to anaphylactic reaction or sepsis, hypovolemic shock due to loss of fluids or blood, neurogenic shock due to massive trauma to the neuro system or cardiogenic shock due to a massive MI, trauma to the heart, basically failure of the pump itself. That is the deadliest shock of all.

We will discuss each shock in detail with a separate study sheet.

Trend your patients vitals signs, level of consciousness and urine output and be aware of any changes, they may be subtle changes but identifying them in a timely manner can save your patient's life.