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Bronchiolitis Initial assessment

Child Health Nursing | Initial assessment

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Fictional educational example. Individualize using verified patient findings, authorized treatment and current local protocols. No real patient record or observed outcome is claimed.

Clinical assessment

Subjective: Runny nose followed by cough, feeding difficulty and noisy breathing.

Objective findings and required checks: Increased breathing effort and fewer wet nappies; assess apnea and oxygenation.

Physical examination and investigations: Clinical respiratory and hydration assessment; additional tests only when indicated by the treating team.

Supply actual values, units, timing and trends during supervised application. Do not invent missing clinical data.

Clinical focus and pathophysiology

Bronchiolitis: Viral inflammation and mucus narrow small airways in infancy.

Medical / surgical management

Provide supportive care, safe feeding or prescribed hydration and oxygen when indicated; monitor closely.

Illustrative drug and treatment study

Medicine / treatment	Purpose	Nursing checks

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Medicine / treatment	Purpose	Nursing checks
Prescribed oxygen	Treat clinically significant hypoxemia under the local pathway	Check probe placement and response
no routine antibiotic or bronchodilator	Not automatically indicated for typical bronchiolitis	Treatment decisions require pediatric review.

Treatment examples are not a prescription. Verify the authorized product, dose, route, timing, contraindications and current local product information.

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Nursing care plan

Nursing diagnoses use original clinical problem wording. They are not the licensed NANDA-I classification. Verify any formal label or code against your institution's licensed current edition; select actual or risk diagnoses only when supported by assessment.

Context task: Establish the immediate clinical priorities and verify the baseline before assuming a diagnosis.

Set individualized measurable targets and an exact review time. Select actual or risk statements only when supported by assessment.

Assessment: subjective / objective	Nursing diagnosis: original problem wording	Short- and longer-term goals	Nursing interventions with rationale	Evaluation
Ask: Ask about breathlessness, chest tightness and activity tolerance. Assess: Record respiratory rate, effort, SpO2 and mental state against the prescribed target.	Breathing difficulty affecting oxygenation. Possible factors: altered ventilation or gas exchange. Validate against the patient's assessment.	Short-term: After the first indicated intervention, at the documented review time: Breathing effort improves and oxygenation remains within the individualized target. Longer-term: Before the clinically approved transition or agreed follow-up: Explains the respiratory action plan and demonstrates the prescribed device technique.	1. Reassess work of breathing and response to each intervention. Rationale: Trend changes identify deterioration earlier than a single reading. 2. Position to ease breathing, cluster care and allow rest. Rationale: This can reduce respiratory demand and distress. 3. Give oxygen and respiratory medicines only according to the clinical prescription or emergency protocol. Rationale: Individualized treatment supports oxygenation without unsafe blanket targets. 4. Provide supportive care, safe feeding or prescribed hydration and oxygen when indicated; monitor closely. Rationale: Viral inflammation and mucus narrow small airways in infancy. The condition-specific plan addresses the underlying problem while response is monitored.	Record the baseline and reassessed finding, the time and whether this goal is met, partly met or not met. If not met, reassess causes and revise or escalate. Do not record an unobserved improvement.

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Assessment: subjective / objective	Nursing diagnosis: original problem wording	Short- and longer-term goals	Nursing interventions with rationale	Evaluation
Ask: Report sputum, cough effectiveness and chest discomfort. Assess: Observe airway sounds, cough, secretions and ability to speak.	Difficulty clearing respiratory secretions. Possible factors: retained secretions and reduced cough effectiveness. Validate against the patient's assessment.	Short-term: After the first indicated intervention, at the documented review time: Airway remains patent and the patient demonstrates a more effective cough. Longer-term: Before the clinically approved transition or agreed follow-up: Demonstrates the agreed secretion-management technique before discharge.	1. Assess cough, breath sounds and secretion changes. Rationale: Changes can indicate obstruction or worsening infection. 2. Support a comfortable upright position and coached coughing when appropriate. Rationale: Position and an effective cough can help secretion clearance. 3. Provide prescribed inhaled treatment or suction only when indicated and within competence. Rationale: Targeted therapy supports airway clearance while limiting procedural harm.	Record the baseline and reassessed finding, the time and whether this goal is met, partly met or not met. If not met, reassess causes and revise or escalate. Do not record an unobserved improvement.
Ask: Ask about thirst, intake, vomiting, stools and dizziness. Assess: Monitor weight trend, intake/output, mucosa, circulation and relevant electrolytes.	Insufficient fluid replacement for current losses. Possible factors: intake below requirements or increased fluid loss. Validate against the patient's assessment.	Short-term: After the first indicated intervention, at the documented review time: Hydration and circulation improve within the agreed reassessment interval. Longer-term: Before the clinically approved transition or agreed follow-up: Patient or caregiver explains the individualized fluid plan and warning signs.	1. Measure intake and losses using age-appropriate methods. Rationale: Accurate trends guide replacement and help prevent overcorrection. 2. Offer oral fluids only when swallowing, consciousness and the treatment plan permit; otherwise implement prescribed replacement. Rationale: The safest route depends on aspiration risk and clinical severity. 3. Reassess perfusion, weight and laboratory trends after prescribed replacement. Rationale: Both continued dehydration and fluid overload require prompt recognition.	Record the baseline and reassessed finding, the time and whether this goal is met, partly met or not met. If not met, reassess causes and revise or escalate. Do not record an unobserved improvement.

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Assessment: subjective / objective	Nursing diagnosis: original problem wording	Short- and longer-term goals	Nursing interventions with rationale	Evaluation
Ask: Ask what the learner already knows and wants to understand. Assess: Use teach-back or demonstration to identify specific gaps.	Learning needs about the condition and care plan. Possible factors: new information, complex treatment or limited prior teaching. Validate against the patient's assessment.	Short-term: After the first indicated intervention, at the documented review time: Explains the most important immediate action in their own words. Longer-term: Before the clinically approved transition or agreed follow-up: Demonstrates the agreed care skills and names follow-up and warning signs.	1. Assess language, literacy, hearing, vision and preferred learning method. Rationale: Accessible teaching improves understanding. 2. Teach a few condition-specific points using plain language and demonstration. Rationale: Focused information is easier to retain and apply. 3. Use teach-back, correct misunderstandings and provide an accessible written plan. Rationale: Checking understanding supports safer self-management. 4. Teach small supported feeds when safe, nasal care as advised and early review for breathing or feeding deterioration. Rationale: Condition-specific teaching connects the treatment plan to safe continuing care.	Record the baseline and reassessed finding, the time and whether this goal is met, partly met or not met. If not met, reassess causes and revise or escalate. Do not record an unobserved improvement.

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Health education and continuing care

Teach small supported feeds when safe, nasal care as advised and early review for breathing or feeding deterioration.

Transition only after clinical readiness is confirmed. Reconcile medicines, check access and caregiver support, and document who will review the patient and when.

Urgent warning signs

Apnea, cyanosis, exhaustion, poor responsiveness or inability to maintain hydration needs urgent escalation.

Evaluation and conclusion

For each goal, document met, partly met or not met using observed evidence and the review time. Reassess and revise if progress is inadequate. Individual assessment, prioritized care and coordinated review guide this topic.

Quick Revision

- Viral inflammation and mucus narrow small airways in infancy.

- Priority concerns: Breathing difficulty affecting oxygenation; Difficulty clearing respiratory secretions; Insufficient fluid replacement for current losses; Learning needs about the condition and care plan.

- Apnea, cyanosis, exhaustion, poor responsiveness or inability to maintain hydration needs urgent escalation.

- Teach small supported feeds when safe, nasal care as advised and early review for breathing or feeding deterioration.

Exam / viva: Which finding changes the order of priorities, and what must be escalated immediately?

References

Nursing Fundamentals, 2e - Ernstmeyer & Christman (editors), Open RN / WisTech Open, 2024
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https://www.indiannursingcouncil.org/gazette-notification

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