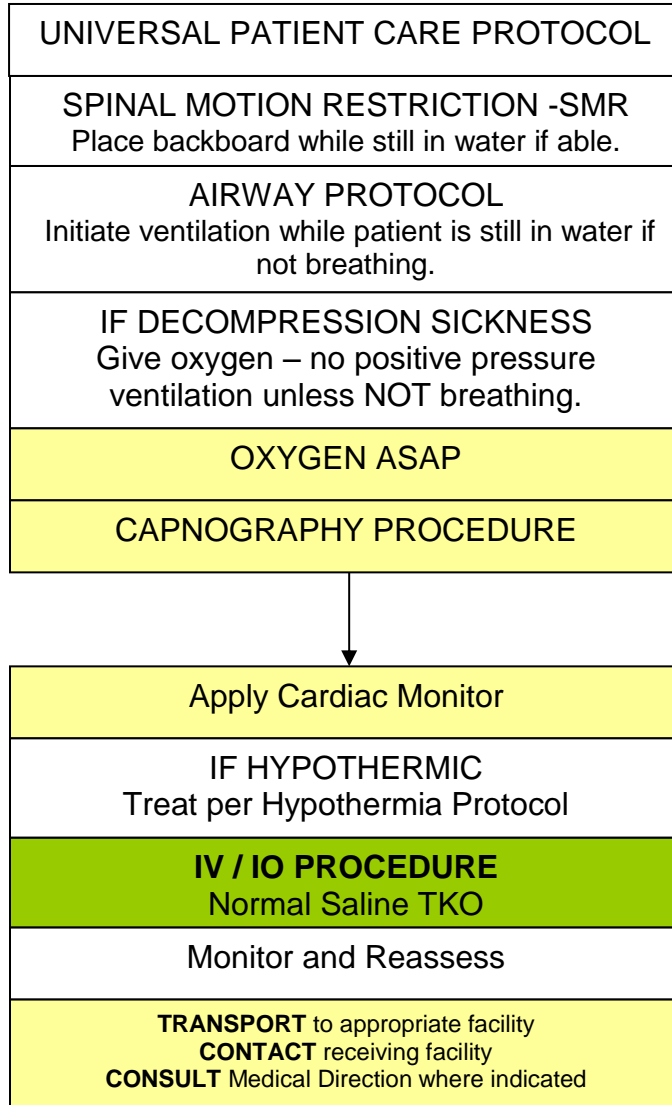




Section 6: Adult Trauma Protocols

ADULT TRAUMA: DROWNING

E	EMT	E
A	AEMT	A
P	PARAMEDIC	P
M	MED CONTROL	M





Section 6: Adult Trauma Protocols

ADULT TRAUMA: DROWNING-Cont.

PEARLS and KEY POINTS

HISTORY	SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS	DIFFERENTIAL DIAGNOSIS
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Submersion in water regardless of depth• Possible trauma i.e. fall, diving board• Duration of immersion• Temperature of water	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Period of unconsciousness• Unresponsive• Mental status changes• Decreased or absent vital signs• Vomiting• Coughing	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Trauma• Pre-existing medical problem• Barotrauma (diving)• Decompression sickness

- Exam: Trauma Survey, Head, Neck, Chest, Abdomen, Pelvis, Back, Extremities, Skin, Neuro
- Drowning due to suffocation from submersion in water.
- 2 causes – breath holding which leads to aspiration of water; & laryngospasm which closes the glottis.
- Both causes lead to profound hypoxia and death.
- Pulmonary edema can develop within 4 - 48 hours after submersion.
- All victims should be transported for evaluation due to potential for worsening over the next several hours.
- Drowning is a leading cause of death among would-be rescuers.
- Allow appropriately trained and certified rescuers to remove victims from areas of danger.
- With pressure injuries (decompression / barotrauma), consider transport for availability of a hyperbaric chamber.
- All hypothermic / hypothermic patients (body core temp > 35 degrees C) should have resuscitation performed until care is transferred, or if there are other signs of obvious death (putrification, traumatic injury unsustainable to life).
- A drowning patient is in cardiac arrest after the submersion.
- Consider a c-spine injury in all drowning cases. Always use spinal motion restriction protocols for a drowning patient.
- Patients with low core temperatures will not respond to ALS drug interventions. Maintain warming procedures and supportive care.
- **DO NOT** perform the Heimlich maneuver to remove water from the lungs prior to resuscitation.