

## APPARENT LIFE-THREATENING EVENT (ALTE) – PEDIATRIC

APPROVED:

  
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### **Information Needed:**

An Apparent Life-Threatening Event (ALTE) is any episode that is frightening to the observer (may even think infant or child has died) and usually involves any combination of the following symptoms:

- Apnea (central or obstructive)
- Loss of consciousness
- Color change (cyanosis, pallor, erythema, plethora)
- Marked change or loss in muscle tone
- Choking or gagging

ALTE's usually occur in infants under 12 months old, however; any child less than 2 years of age who exhibits any of the above symptoms should be considered an ALTE.

Utilize the Broselow Tape to measure length and then SMC Pediatric Reference Card for determination of drug dosages, fluid volumes, defibrillation/cardioversion joules and appropriate equipment sizes.

### **Objective Findings:**

- History of any of the following:
  - Apnea
  - Loss of consciousness
  - Color change
  - Loss in muscle tone
  - Episode of choking or gagging
- Determine the severity, nature and duration of the episode
  - Was child awake or sleeping at time of episode
  - What resuscitative measures were taken
- Age less than 2 years
- Obtain a complete medical history to include:
  - Past Medical History
  - Evidence of seizure activity
  - Current or recent infections
  - Recent trauma

- Medication history
- Known gastroesophageal reflux or feeding difficulties
- Unusual sleeping or feeding patterns

**Treatment:**

- Routine medical care
- Assume the history given is accurate
- Perform a comprehensive physical assessment that includes general appearance, skin color, extent of interaction with the environment, and evidence of current or past trauma. **Note: Exam May Be Normal**
- Treat any identifiable causes as indicated
- Transport. **Note: If parent/guardian refuses medical care/and or transport, a consult with Pediatric Base Hospital Physician is required prior to completing a Refusal of Care form.**

**Precautions and Comments:**

- In most cases, the infant/child will have a normal physical exam when assessed by prehospital personnel. The parent/caregiver's perception that "something is or was wrong" must be taken seriously.
- Approximately 40-50% of ALTE cases can be attributed to an identifiable cause(s) such as child abuse, SIDS, swallowing dysfunction, infection, bronchiolitis, seizures, CNS anomalies, cardiac disease, chronic respiratory disease, upper airway obstruction, metabolic disorders, or anemia. The remaining causes have no known etiology.