

# Oropharyngeal Airway

Oropharyngeal airways (OPAs) are used to improve airway patency. They are used in patients where structural airway support is required to optimise ventilation. It helps to keep the tongue from obstruction the airway. They are contraindicated in patients with a gag reflex. Patient who require an OPA require high acuity care. Ensure that a team is gathered to adequately care for the patient.

1

## GATHER EQUIPMENT



Oropharyngeal airway



Tongue depressor

OPAs come in sizes from 000 to 6.

To find the correct size, measure with the estimated OPA from the central incisors to the angle of the jaw.

An incorrectly sized OPA can cause airway obstruction.



2

## PROCEDURE

Position the child in a way that allows access to the mouth.



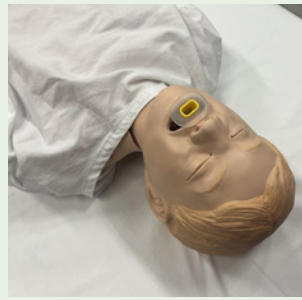
3

Use a tongue depressor to help move the tongue out of the way. Insert the OPA with the concave surface to the tongue under direct vision.



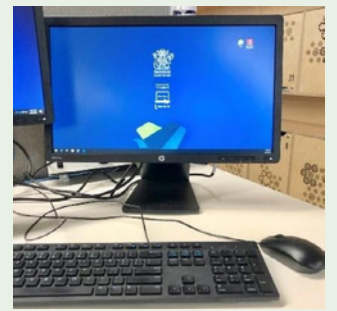
4

A correctly sized OPA should sit flush.



5

Document the size of OPA used and reassess its effectiveness.



## ALERT

Do not twist, turn or invert the OPA in an infant or child as this can damage their soft palate.

If the patient begins to gag during insertion, remove the OPA.



## For further information:

[Clinical Assessment of the Paediatric Patient – Rapid Assessment / Primary and Secondary Survey / Vital Signs \(QH only\)](#)

### Video:

[Core Oropharyngeal Airway Insertion](#)

## References:

Children's Health Queensland - STORK. (2018). CORE: Oropharyngeal Airway Insertion. Retrieved 8 February 2023 from <https://vimeo.com/268697324>

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Kliegman, R., Stanton, B., Geme, J., Schor, N. & Behrman, R., (2016). Nelsons Textbook of Pediatrics. 20th ed. Philadelphia: Saunders Elsevier.

Queensland Health State wide ED Nurse Educator Committee, Pearson, N., Cole, T., & Carney, S. (Eds.). (2016). Unit 5 Respiratory. In Queensland Health: Transition Support Program - Emergency. Module 3 - Paediatric Care in the Emergency Department (4th ed., pp. 65–67). State of Queensland (Queensland Health).

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- Supporting consumer rights and informed decision making in partnership with healthcare practitioners including the right to decline intervention or ongoing management.

- Advising consumers of their choices in an environment that is culturally appropriate and which enables comfortable and confidential discussion. This includes the use of interpreter services where necessary.
- Ensuring informed consent is obtained prior to delivering care.
- Meeting all legislative requirements and professional standards.
- Applying standard precautions, and additional precautions as necessary, when delivering care.
- Documenting all care in accordance with mandatory and local requirements.

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