

Frequently Asked Questions

Summer, 2010

Question: Can I continue to monitor capnography when I am using CPAP on the patient?

Answer:

Yes, capnography can certainly continue to be monitored during CPAP (Continuous positive airway pressure) therapy and it is often recommended. CPAP is generally used in the pre-hospital setting for patients with respiratory distress due to acute pulmonary edema or COPD. These patients have decreased oxygen saturation and increased retention of carbon dioxide. Monitoring the trend of the EtCO₂ can assist in determining the effectiveness of the CPAP. Also, in rare instances where CPAP is being administered at higher pressures, EtCO₂ may actually begin to increase to levels sufficient to cause a decreased level of consciousness and subsequent hypoventilation. Continuous capnography monitoring could alert you to this complication and may lead you to other interventions such as intubation, depending on your local protocol. The method by which you monitor capnography will depend on the CPAP unit used by your agency. In most cases you should be able to simply use the CapnoLine® under the CPAP mask. Some CPAP systems are designed to allow the use of the FilterLine® in-line with the CPAP apparatus. Check with the manufacturer of your CPAP device to determine the appropriate method of monitoring capnography.