

A B C D E

**The ABCDE system for
managing the critically ill
patient**

Case study

John is a patient who has had a laparotomy and he has been on the ward for a week.

In the morning the nurse finds him seriously ill.

What shall we do?

?

To solve this problem:

- Think ABCDE to make it easier to remember what to do
- Otherwise chaotic, stressful, difficult

- A – Airway
 - B – Breathing
 - C – Circulation
 - D – Disability (Neurology)
 - E – Everything Else
-
- Assess & Treat

Why ABCDE?

- A system used in hospitals all over the world
- Easy to remember
- Finds and treats most urgent problems first
- Leaves diagnosis for later

Why does "airway" come first in ABCDE?

It starts with A

Without a free airway, the patient cannot get air into and out of lungs, and death can occur VERY quickly.

There are very quick & easy treatments that solve the problem

How to do ABCDE

1. Identify that the patient is critically ill
2. Call for HELP!
 - Assess Airway
 - Treat Airway

- Assess Breathing
- Treat Breathing

- Assess Circulation
- Treat Circulation

- Assess Disability
- Treat Disability

- Assess Everything Else
- Treat Everything Else

- Important to be systematic
- Take one step at a time
- Treat any problems you find before moving on
- Communicate clearly

- When the patient is stable, time for other care:
 - Diagnosis & Treatment
 - Supportive care
 - Nutrition

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What shall we do?

1. Identify that the patient is critically ill
2. Call for HELP!

- Assess Airway Blocked airway & asphyxia
- Treat Airway

- Assess Breathing Pneumoni
- Treat Breathing

- Assess Circulation Shock
- Treat Circulation

- Assess Disability Hypoglycaemia
- Treat Disability

- Assess Everything Else Peritonitis
- Treat Everything Else

- Asante!