Shortness of breath

If severe respiratory distress ie any of the following:
• Poor respiratory effort / exhaustion / decreased GCS
• SpO₂ <90%
• RR >25/min

1) Fully undress, apply a gown and wrist band

2) Record vital signs: BP, HR, RR, SpO₂, Temp, GCS, BM
Commence Observation Chart and Early Warning Score - Follow ED Escalation Plan

3) If SpO₂ < 94% with NO history of COPD apply 15 litres O₂ - need ABG WITHIN 1 hr.
If history of COPD, ask Senior Doctor to prescribe O₂ aiming for sats of 88-92%.
All COPD patients on oxygen need an ABG AS SOON AS POSSIBLE post arrival.

4) If signs of severe sepsis discuss with Senior Doctor - give antibiotics early and consider transfer to resus

5) Perform ECG and Doctor review

6) If the patient has a history of Asthma print asthma pathway & record PEFR
If PEFR is <50% of best or predicted (if unsure of usual PEFR - see reverse) give PGD
Salbutamol nebuliser

7) The following patients may warrant a CXR being arranged from IAU. Seek a doctor to examine the patients’ chest and arrange as needed:
• ALL exacerbations of COPD
• Patients with ? pneumothorax (? Chest wall trauma / previous pneumothorax)
• Patients with ? pneumonia (Pleuritic pain, productive cough, fever)
• Patients with ? LVF (SOB worse lying flat, cardiac history)

8) Only cannulate and complete VIPS if ? pneumonia or ? septic

9) Take bloods: FBC, UE
   If ? Pneumonia add LFT, CRP, VBG, Blood Cultures.
   NOTE - If ? PE (unilateral leg swelling, recent travel/immobilisation/surgery/active cancer, haemoptysis, pleuritic pain) - request doctor review in IAU. Doctor should request d-dimer as appropriate via NOTIS PE pathway.
   Please DO NOT request d-dimer without dr review

10) Request old notes if pt has COPD

Any tasks NOT completed within IAU should be handed over verbally to the team and placed on NURSE ORDERS
## Predicted normal PEF (EU/EN13826 scale)

Find value in table and enter into ‘Best PEF’ field in box 2 on reverse

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Note that PEF is greatest at around **35 years** in men and **30 years** in women

If the value you need is not shown above follow the link below for an online calculator

http://www.peakflow.com/top_nav/normal_values/PEFNorms.html