Tricks of the Trade: Helpful hints for the daily practice of EM

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PORTION DISTORTION: MORE ALCOHOL IN TUMBLER

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Featured EM blog on MedPedia (equivalent of Wikipedia, except only for medicine)
Top Ten Medical Blogs on www.blogs.com
Weekly “Tricks of the Trade”

Case 1
35 yo man presents after being assaulted to the head

Have I missed any additional scalp lacerations?
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Manual palpation of the scalp

CASE 1: SCALP LACERATION

How do you minimize missing a 2nd laceration?

Good lighting is the key!

1. LED flashlight ($8-30)
2. Manual palpation of the scalp

Case 1
Have I missed any additional scalp lacerations?

Adequate visualization using bright LED flashlight

Case 1
You find and repair 3 scalp lacerations with staples.
You suture the ear laceration.

How do you prevent an auricular hematoma?

Traditional teaching: Gauze in antihelix.

Traditional teaching: Gauze in antihelix + sutures.
Case 1
How do you prevent an auricular hematoma?

Trick of the trade: Make a plaster splint.

Ferengi extraterrestrial race from the Star Trek universe
Case 1
How do you apply a pressure dressing on the head?

Traditional teaching

Case 1
How do you apply a pressure dressing on the head?

Trick of the trade: Beanie hat

Thanks to
Dr. Eric Silman
(Chief resident, UCSF-SFGH)
**Case 1**
How do you apply a pressure dressing on the head?

Trick of the trade: Beanie hat

**Case 2**
Can I close scalp lacerations without staples?

**Modified Hair Apposition Technique (HAT trick)**

- Uses opposing hair strands & adhesive
- One full 360° revolution twist of hair
- Apply adhesive at twisting point
- Repeat this along length of wound
- Do NOT over-twist the hair.
- Do NOT tie a knot.

**Contraindications to the HAT trick:**
- Laceration >10 cm long
- Grossly contaminated wounds
- Active bleeding from the laceration
- Significant wound tension
- Hair strands <3 cm long

**Case 2**
Speaking of tissue adhesives, how can I prevent tissue adhesives from “running” into undesired areas?

Use Trendelenberg or reverse Trendelenberg
Case 2
Speaking of tissue adhesives, how can I prevent tissue adhesives from “running” into undesired areas?
Use petroleum-based gel as a barrier.

Case 2
Speaking of tissue adhesives, how can I prevent tissue adhesives from “running” into undesired areas?
Use a tegaderm tape as a barrier.

Case 2
What are other uses of tissue adhesives?
In combination with steristrip tapes, can close wounds under slight tension or inverted

Case 3
A 78 year old woman sustains an arm laceration. How would you repair this laceration?
Case 3

Case 4
Pediatric Pearls
Patient's mother mentions that his asthma has been acting up for the past 2 days. You maybe hear wheezing. The patient is only partly cooperative with the exam. How can you get a better exam?

Pediatric Pearls
Candle flame app
Balloonimals app (Lite version free)

ASTHMA EXACERBATION
You successfully treat an 8 year old boy with a moderate asthma exacerbation. What do you include in D/C instructions? Discharge patient home with a MDI. Avoid asthma exacerbation while patient waits at pharmacy to refill albuterol MDI. Consider discharging patient with a spacer.
CASE 4: ASTHMA EXACERBATION
You successfully treat a 8 y/o boy with a moderate asthma exacerbation. What do you include in D/C instructions?
Consider discharging patient with a spacer.
- Attach to short strip of ventilator tubing
- Or attach to back of styrofoam cup

Thanks to Dr. Mary Jo Wagner (Synergy Medical Education Alliance)

CASE 5: OCULAR INJURY
50 y/o man w/p altercation presents with eye pain from pepper spray by a robber.

CASE 5: OCULAR INJURY
The patient is extremely sensitive to application of anesthetic eyedrops. How can you apply them more gently?
* "Blink it in"
  * Apply drops into medial canthus.
  * Have patient then "blink" the drops in.

"Blink it in"

CASE 5: OCULAR INJURY
Now that he can open his eyes, let's check his visual acuity.
Free iPhone and Droid app
EyeChart

Courtesy of Dr. Sam Ko and Kimberly Chan Loma Linda
How can we determine if his blurred vision is the result of the pepper spray?

The patient had taken out his contacts because of eye pain. His visual acuity is 20/200 in both eyes.

Pinhole correction

You try to apply Morgan lens for ocular irrigation, but the patient pulls them out. How can you irrigate the eyes?

Nasal cannula irrigation

Tip: Add 10 mL of 1% lidocaine into 1 liter of saline bag
CASE 5: OCULAR INJURY

After irrigation, soft tissue swelling of the eyelid makes it difficult to get an unobstructed view. You do not have an eyelid retractor. How do you retract the eyelids?

Paperclip eyelid retraction

Examine traumatized orbit early before soft tissue swelling worsens.

Alternative: "Roll up" the upper eyelid with Q-tip

Think about the retractable projector screen

CASE 6: EPISTAXIS
NASAL PACKING - EPISTAXIS

- Wadded Paper
- Cotton Balls
- Ativene, Telfa, Surgicel, Gelfoam
- Iodoform gauze, Vaseline Gauze

SPECIALIZED BALLOON PACKS

- PVA (Polyvinyl Alcohol) Foam
- Rhino-Rocket
- The Slik-Pak

SALT PORK

CASE 7: PERITONSILLAR ABSCESS

23 y/o male presents with a sore throat and left-sided peritonsillar swelling.

Suboptimal view of aspiration
CASE 7: PERITONSILLAR ABSCESS
How would you visualize the abscess during needle aspiration?
Use a laryngoscope with a Macintosh (curved) blade.
• Obstructs view less than a tongue blade plus penlight
• Provides focused lighting
• If cooperative, have patient retract inferiorly.

CASE 7: PERITONSILLAR ABSCESS
How would you perform the needle aspiration?
Use a spinal needle with the sheath trimmed such that just 1.5 cm of the needle is exposed.
• Longer needle keeps syringe outside of the mouth
• Reduces risk of too a deep puncture

CASE 8: ODORS IN THE ED
How do you minimize the smell of pus during the I&D?
Suction the pus directly into closed canister.
Aerosolized beverage in an enclosed room:

* Orange juice
* Coffee

CASE 8

"It's about ME... everyone for themselves!"

Wear 2 face masks with a fresh tea bag in between.

Thanks to Dr. James Juarez (Rogue Valley Medical Center)

TERMINATION OF INTRACTABLE HICCUPS WITH DIGITAL RECTAL MASSAGE


QUESTIONS

Weekly “Tricks of the Trade” updated at:
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