Chest Tube Algorithm for Spontaneous Pneumothorax

Emergency Department

Positive chest x-ray

Asymptomatic

Obtain Surgery consult

Symptomatic/ non-critical

Consult Surgery for placement & management of chest tube/admission

The pt. is exhibiting one or more of the following symptoms:
- Chest pain
- Oxygen requirement
- Respiratory distress
- Tachycardia
- Tachypnea

Symptomatic/ Impending respiratory collapse

Consider needle decompression (tension pneumothorax)

Consult Surgery for placement & management of chest tube/admission

Inpatient

Positive chest x-ray

Asymptomatic

Obtain Surgery consult

Symptomatic/ non-critical

Consult Surgery for placement and management of chest tube

Symptomatic/ Impending respiratory collapse

Consider transfer to Critical Care Service and consult Surgery

ED may place chest tube after consulting Surgery, if Surgery not available. Surgery will follow these patients in hospital

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1. Decrease duration of Pleural Alteplase (tPA) therapy from _____ to _____ by _______.
2. Decrease length of stay for patients requiring chest tube placement for parapneumonic effusion from _____ to _____ by _______.
3. Surgery consulted for patients with pneumothorax – yes/no? Prior to intervention?
4. Correct timing of chest CT when indicated (after 3 days) – BPA build to notify provider that this needs to be ordered.
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References
