

MH Hotline  
1-800-644-9737

Outside the US:  
1-315-464-7079

# EMERGENCY THERAPY FOR MALIGNANT HYPERTHERMIA

## DIAGNOSIS vs. ASSOCIATED PROBLEMS

### Signs of MH:

- Increasing ETCO<sub>2</sub>
- Trunk or total body rigidity
- Masseter spasm or trismus
- Tachycardia/tachypnea
- Mixed Respiratory and Metabolic Acidosis
- Increased temperature (may be late sign)
- Myoglobinuria

### Sudden/Unexpected Cardiac Arrest in Young Patients:

- Presume hyperkalemia and initiate treatment (see #6)
- Measure CK, myoglobin, ABGs, until normalized
- Consider dantrolene
- Usually secondary to occult myopathy (e.g., muscular dystrophy)
- Resuscitation may be difficult and prolonged

### Trismus or Masseter Spasm with Succinylcholine

- Early sign of MH in many patients
- If limb muscle rigidity, begin treatment with dantrolene
- For emergent procedures, continue with non-triggering agents, evaluate and monitor the patient, and consider dantrolene treatment
- Follow CK and urine myoglobin for 36 hours.
- Check CK immediately and at 6 hour intervals until returning to normal. Observe for dark or cola colored urine. If present, liberalize fluid intake and test for myoglobin
- Observe in PACU or ICU for at least 12 hours

## ACUTE PHASE TREATMENT

### ① GET HELP. GET DANTROLENE – Notify Surgeon

- Discontinue volatile agents and succinylcholine.
- Hyperventilate with 100% oxygen at flows of 10 L/min. or more.
- Halt the procedure as soon as possible; if emergent, continue with non-triggering anesthetic technique.
- Don't waste time changing the circle system and CO<sub>2</sub> absorbant.

- Each 20 mg bottle has 3 gm mannitol for isotonicity. The pH of the solution is 9.

### ② Dantrolene 2.5 mg/kg rapidly IV through large-bore IV, if possible

To convert kg to lbs for amount of dantrolene, give patients 1 mg/lb (2.5 mg/kg approximates 1 mg/lb).

- Dissolve the 20 mg in each vial with at least 60 mL sterile, preservative-free water for injection. Prewarming (not to exceed 39° C.) the sterile water may expedite solubilization of dantrolene. However, to date, there is no evidence that such warming improves clinical outcome.
- Repeat until signs of MH are reversed.
- Sometimes more than 10 mg/kg (up to 30 mg/kg) is necessary.

- 1-2 mEq/kg if blood gas values are not yet available.

- Cool the patient with core temperature >39° C. Lavage open body cavities, stomach, bladder, or rectum. Apply ice to surface. Infuse cold saline intravenously. Stop cooling if temp. <38° C and falling to prevent drift <36° C.

- Dysrhythmias usually respond to treatment of acidosis and hyperkalemia.
- Use standard drug therapy **except calcium channel blockers, which may cause hyperkalemia or cardiac arrest in the presence of dantrolene.**

- Hyperkalemia – Treat with hyperventilation, bicarbonate, glucose/insulin, calcium.

- Bicarbonate 1-2 mEq/kg IV.
- For **pediatric**, 0.1 units insulin/kg and 1 mL/kg 50% glucose or for **adult**, 10 units regular insulin IV and 50 mL 50% glucose.
- Calcium chloride 10 mg/kg or calcium gluconate 10-50 mg/kg for life-threatening hyperkalemia.
- Check glucose levels hourly.

- Follow ETCO<sub>2</sub>, electrolytes, blood gases, CK, core temperature, urine output and color, coagulation studies. If CK and/or K<sup>+</sup> rise more than transiently or urine output falls to less than 0.5 mL/kg/hr, induce diuresis to >1 mL/kg/hr and give bicarbonate to alkalinize urine to prevent myoglobin-induced renal failure. (See D below)
- Venous blood gas (e.g., femoral vein) values may document hypermetabolism better than arterial values.
- Central venous or PA monitoring as needed and record minute ventilation.
- Place Foley catheter and monitor urine output.

## POST ACUTE PHASE

① Observe the patient in an ICU for at least 24 hours, due to the risk of recrudescence.

② Dantrolene 1 mg/kg q 4-6 hours or 0.25 mg/kg/hr by infusion for at least 24 hours. Further doses may be indicated.

③ Follow vitals and labs as above (see #7)

- Frequent ABG as per clinical signs
- CK every 8-12 hours; less often as the values trend downward

④ Follow urine myoglobin and institute therapy to prevent myoglobin precipitation in renal tubules and the subsequent development of Acute Renal Failure. CK levels above 10,000 U/L is a presumptive sign of rhabdomyolysis and myoglobinuria. Follow standard intensive care therapy for acute rhabdomyolysis and myoglobinuria (urine output >2 mL/kg/hr by hydration and diuretics along with alkalization of urine with Na-bicarbonate infusion with careful attention to both urine and serum pH values).

⑤ Counsel the patient and family regarding MH and further precautions; refer them to MHAUS. Fill out and send in the Adverse Metabolic Reaction to Anesthesia (AMRA) form ([www.mhreg.org](http://www.mhreg.org)) and send a letter to the patient and her/his physician. Refer patient to the nearest Biopsy Center for follow-up.

### Non-Emergency Information

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**CAUTION:** This protocol may not apply to all patients; alter for specific needs.