

Non-Rebreather Mask

● SKILL SNAPSHOT

Purpose

- Delivers a high concentration of supplemental oxygen using a reservoir bag and one-way valves.

When to use

- Short-term support for significant hypoxemia or critical illness while the cause is treated or advanced airway support is prepared.

Supplies needed

- Non-rebreather mask with reservoir/valves; oxygen source and flowmeter; pulse oximeter; skin protection; backup ventilation equipment.

● PREP + PATIENT SETUP

- Verify order/protocol and target SpO₂; rapidly assess airway, breathing, circulation, work of breathing, and mentation.
- Inspect mask, reservoir bag, valves, tubing, and oxygen source.

● VAULT TIP

- Watch the bag, not just the flowmeter. Bag collapse means the patient is not receiving the intended oxygen.

● STEP-BY-STEP

1. Hand hygiene; identify patient; call for help/escalate when severe respiratory distress is present.
2. Connect tubing to oxygen source. Fully inflate the reservoir bag before placing the mask on the patient.
3. Set flow per protocol, commonly 10-15 L/min, high enough to keep the reservoir from collapsing during inspiration.
4. Place mask over nose and mouth; secure elastic strap and shape nose clip for the best tolerated seal.
5. Confirm one-way valves move freely and exhaled gas exits through side ports.
6. Watch reservoir bag through several breaths. It should remain at least one-third to one-half inflated during inspiration.
7. Reassess SpO₂, respiratory rate/depth, work of breathing, breath sounds, color, mentation, heart rate, and comfort immediately.
8. Adjust flow within order/protocol to maintain bag inflation and target oxygenation; do not reduce flow below the safe device requirement.
9. Check for vomiting, secretions, anxiety, skin pressure, and mask displacement. Keep suction available.
10. If oxygenation or work of breathing does not improve, activate escalation pathway and prepare BVM, airway, or advanced respiratory support.
11. Do not leave a deteriorating patient unattended. Continue frequent respiratory reassessment.
12. Maintain oxygen safety: no smoking/open flame, secure cylinders, and avoid petroleum products.

● SAFETY REMINDERS

- Reservoir bag must be inflated before application and stay partially inflated.
- This mask does not provide ventilation; apnea or inadequate breathing requires BVM support.
- Use cautiously in vomiting or inability to protect airway.
- Oxygen is a medication and supports combustion.

● COMMON MISTAKES

- Applying with an empty reservoir.
- Flow too low, causing bag collapse.
- Ignoring a stuck/missing valve.
- Delaying escalation because SpO₂ briefly improves.

● DOCUMENTATION

- Device and flow rate; target SpO₂.
- Pre/post respiratory assessment.
- Reservoir inflation and mask fit.
- Patient response and skin condition.
- Escalation, teaching, notifications.