

The ABCDE Approach

Nursing

The sequence for the acutely unwell — each step treated before the next.

Work in order. Do not proceed past a problem you have not addressed.

1

A • Airway

Patent? Talking is reassuring. Noise means partial obstruction.

2

B • Breathing

Rate, effort, symmetry, saturations, breath sounds.

3

C • Circulation

Pulse, blood pressure, capillary refill, colour, output.

4

D • Disability

AVPU or GCS, pupils, blood glucose, pain, drug chart.

5

E • Exposure

Look everywhere — rashes, wounds, drains, lines, temperature.

Educational reference. Call for help early and reassess after every intervention. Local emergency and escalation protocol governs what