

I. Unit 13: The Respiratory System

A. Organs of the Respiratory System

- 1. Nose
- 2. Pharynx
- 3. Larynx
- 4. Trachea
- 5. Bronchi
- 6. Lungs - alveoli

B. Functions of the Respiratory System

- 1. Gas exchanges between the blood and external environment
  - a) Occurs in the alveoli of the lungs
- 2. Passageways to the lungs purify, humidify, and warm the incoming air

C. The Nose

- 1. Only externally visible part of the respiratory system
- 2. Air enters the nose through the external nostrils (nares)
- 3. Interior of the nose consists of a nasal cavity divided by a nasal septum

D. Upper Respiratory Tract

- 1. Anatomy of the Nasal Cavity
  - a) Olfactory receptors are located in the mucosa on the superior surface
  - b) The rest of the cavity is lined with respiratory mucosa that
    - (1) Moistens air
    - (2) Trap incoming foreign particles
  - c) Lateral walls have projections called conchae
    - (1) Increase surface area
    - (2) Increase air turbulence within the nasal cavity
  - d) The nasal cavity is separated from the oral cavity by the palate
    - (1) Anterior hard palate (bone)
    - (2) Posterior soft palate (muscle)
- 2. Paranasal Sinuses
  - a) Cavities within bones surrounding the nasal cavity are called sinuses

- b) Sinuses are located in the following bones
  - (1) Frontal bone
  - (2) Sphenoid bone
  - (3) Ethmoid bone
  - (4) Maxillary bone
- c) Function of the sinuses
  - (1) Lighten the skull
  - (2) Act as resonance chambers for speech
  - (3) Produce mucus that drains into the nasal cavity
- 3. Pharynx (Throat)
  - a) Muscular passage from nasal cavity to larynx
  - b) Three regions of the pharynx
    - (1) Nasopharynx - superior region behind nasal cavity
    - (2) Oropharynx - middle region behind mouth
    - (3) Laryngopharynx - inferior region attached to larynx
  - c) The oropharynx and laryngopharynx are common passageways for air and food
  - d) Structures of the Pharynx
    - (1) Pharyngotympanic tubes open into the nasopharynx
    - (2) Tonsils of the pharynx
      - (a) Pharyngeal tonsil (adenoids) are located in the nasopharynx
      - (b) Palatine tonsils are located in the oropharynx
      - (c) Lingual tonsils are found at the base of the tongue
- 4. Larynx (Voice Box)
  - a) Routes air and food into proper channels
  - b) Plays a role in speech
  - c) Made of eight rigid hyaline cartilages and a spoon-shaped flap of elastic cartilage (epiglottis)
  - d) Structures of the Larynx
    - (1) Thyroid cartilage

- (a) Largest of the hyaline cartilages
- (b) Protrudes anteriorly (Adam's apple)
- (2) Epiglottis
  - (a) Protects the superior opening of the larynx
  - (b) Routes food to the esophagus and air toward the trachea
  - (c) When swallowing, the epiglottis rises and forms a lid over the opening of the larynx
- (3) Vocal folds (true vocal cords)
  - (a) Vibrate with expelled air to create sound (speech)
- (4) Glottis - opening between vocal cords
- 5. Trachea (Windpipe)
  - a) Four-inch-long tube that connects larynx with bronchi
  - b) Walls are reinforced with C-shaped hyaline cartilage
  - c) Lined with ciliated mucosa
    - (1) Beat continuously in the opposite direction of incoming air
    - (2) Expel mucus loaded with dust and other debris away from lungs
- 6. Respiratory Membrane (Air-Blood Barrier)
  - a) Thin squamous epithelial layer lines alveolar walls
  - b) Alveolar pores connect neighboring air sacs
  - c) Pulmonary capillaries cover external surfaces of alveoli
  - d) On one side of the membrane is air and on the other side is blood
- 7. Gas Exchange
  - a) Gas crosses the respiratory membrane by diffusion
  - b) Oxygen enters the blood
  - c) Carbon dioxide enters the alveoli
  - d) Alveolar macrophages ("dust cells") add protection by picking up bacteria, carbon particles, and other debris
  - e) Surfactant (a lipid molecule) coats gas-exposed alveolar surfaces
- 8. Main (Primary) Bronchi
  - a) Formed by division of the trachea

- b) Enters the lung at the hilum (medial depression)
- c) Right bronchus is wider, shorter, and straighter than left
- d) Bronchi subdivide into smaller and smaller branches
- 9. Lungs
  - a) Occupy most of the thoracic cavity
    - (1) Heart occupies central portion called mediastinum
  - b) Apex is near the clavicle (superior portion)
  - c) Base rests on the diaphragm (inferior portion)
  - d) Each lung is divided into lobes by fissures
    - (1) Left lung - two lobes
    - (2) Right lung - three lobes
  - e) Coverings of the Lungs
    - (1) Serosa covers the outer surface of the lungs
      - (a) Pulmonary (visceral) pleura covers the lung surface
      - (b) Parietal pleura lines the walls of the thoracic cavity
    - (2) Pleural fluid fills the area between layers of pleura to allow gliding
    - (3) These two pleural layers resist being pulled apart
- 10. Bronchial (Respiratory) Tree Divisions
  - a) All but the smallest of these passageways have reinforcing cartilage in their walls
    - (1) Primary bronchi
    - (2) Secondary bronchi
    - (3) Tertiary bronchi
    - (4) Bronchioles
    - (5) Terminal bronchioles
- 11. Respiratory Zone
  - a) Structures
    - (1) Respiratory bronchioles
    - (2) Alveolar ducts
    - (3) Alveolar sacs

- (4) Alveoli (air sacs)
- b) Site of gas exchange = alveoli only
- E. Four Events of Respiration
  - 1. Pulmonary ventilation - moving air in and out of the lungs (commonly called breathing)
  - 2. External respiration - gas exchange between pulmonary blood and alveoli
    - a) Oxygen is loaded into the blood
    - b) Carbon dioxide is unloaded from the blood
  - 3. Respiratory gas transport - transport of oxygen and carbon dioxide via the bloodstream
  - 4. Internal respiration - gas exchange between blood and tissue cells in systemic capillaries
- F. Four Events of Respiration
  - 1. Mechanics of Breathing (Pulmonary Ventilation)
    - a) Completely mechanical process that depends on volume changes in the thoracic cavity
      - (1) Volume changes lead to pressure changes, which lead to the flow of gases to equalize pressure
    - b) Two phases
      - (1) Inspiration = inhalation
        - (a) flow of air into lungs
        - (b) Diaphragm and external intercostal muscles contract
        - (c) The size of the thoracic cavity increases
        - (d) External air is pulled into the lungs due to
          - (i) Increase in intrapulmonary volume
          - (ii) Decrease in gas pressure
      - (2) Expiration = exhalation
        - (a) air leaving lungs
        - (b) Largely a passive process which depends on natural lung elasticity
        - (c) As muscles relax, air is pushed out of the lungs due to
          - (i) Decrease in intrapulmonary volume

- (ii) Increase in gas pressure
- (d) Forced expiration can occur mostly by contracting internal intercostal muscles to depress the rib cage
- c) Pressure Differences in the Thoracic Cavity
  - (1) Normal pressure within the pleural space is always negative (intrapleural pressure)
  - (2) Differences in lung and pleural space pressures keep lungs
- d) Nonrespiratory Air (Gas) Movements
  - (1) Can be caused by reflexes or voluntary actions
  - (2) Examples:
    - (a) Cough and sneeze - clears lungs of debris
    - (b) Crying - emotionally induced mechanism
    - (c) Laughing - similar to crying
    - (d) Hiccup - sudden inspirations
    - (e) Yawn - very deep inspiration
- e) Respiratory Volumes and Capacities
  - (1) Normal breathing moves about 500 mL of air with each breath
    - (a) This respiratory volume is tidal volume (TV)
  - (2) Many factors that affect respiratory capacity
    - (a) A person's size
    - (b) Sex
    - (c) Age
    - (d) Physical condition
  - (3) Inspiratory reserve volume (IRV)
    - (a) Amount of air that can be taken in forcibly over the tidal volume
      - (i) Usually between 2100 and 3200 mL
  - (4) Expiratory reserve volume (ERV)
    - (a) Amount of air that can be forcibly exhaled
    - (b) Approximately 1200 mL
  - (5) Residual volume

- (a) Air remaining in lung after expiration
- (b) About 1200 ml
- (6) Vital capacity
  - (a) The total amount of exchangeable air
    - (i) Vital capacity = TV + IRV + ERV
- (7) Dead space volume
  - (a) Air that remains in conducting zone and never reaches alveoli
    - (i) About 150 mL
- (8) Functional volume
  - (a) Air that actually reaches the respiratory zone
    - (i) Usually about 350 mL
- (9) Respiratory capacities are measured with a spirometer
- f) Respiratory Sounds
  - (1) Sounds are monitored with a stethoscope
  - (2) Two recognizable sounds can be heard with a stethoscope
    - (a) Bronchial sounds - produced by air rushing through trachea and bronchi
    - (b) Vesicular breathing sounds - soft sounds of air filling alveoli
- 2. External Respiration
  - a) Oxygen loaded into the blood
    - (1) The alveoli always have more oxygen than the blood
    - (2) Oxygen moves by diffusion towards the area of lower concentration
    - (3) Pulmonary capillary blood gains oxygen
  - b) Carbon dioxide unloaded out of the blood
    - (1) Blood returning from tissues has higher concentrations of carbon dioxide than air in the alveoli
    - (2) Pulmonary capillary blood gives up carbon dioxide to be exhaled
  - c) Blood leaving the lungs is oxygen-rich and carbon dioxide-poor
- 3. Gas Transport in the Blood
  - a) Oxygen transport in the blood

- (1) Most oxygen attached to hemoglobin to form oxyhemoglobin ( $\text{HbO}_2$ )
- (2) A small dissolved amount is carried in the plasma
- b) Carbon dioxide transport in the blood
  - (1) Most is transported in the plasma as bicarbonate ion ( $\text{HCO}_3^-$ )
  - (2) A small amount is carried inside red blood cells on hemoglobin, but at different binding sites than those of oxygen
  - (3) For carbon dioxide to diffuse out of blood into the alveoli, it must be released from its bicarbonate form:
    - (a) Bicarbonate ions enter RBC
    - (b) Combine with hydrogen ions
    - (c) Form carbonic acid ( $\text{H}_2\text{CO}_3$ )
    - (d) Carbonic acid splits to form water +  $\text{CO}_2$
    - (e) Carbon dioxide diffuses from blood into alveoli
- 4. Internal Respiration
  - a) Exchange of gases between blood and body cells
  - b) An opposite reaction to what occurs in the lungs
    - (1) Carbon dioxide diffuses out of tissue to blood (called loading)
    - (2) Oxygen diffuses from blood into tissue (called unloading)
- G. Neural Regulation of Respiration
  - 1. Activity of respiratory muscles is transmitted to and from the brain by phrenic and intercostal nerves
  - 2. Neural centers that control rate and depth are located in the medulla and pons
    - a) Medulla - sets basic rhythm of breathing and contains a pacemaker called the self-exciting inspiratory center
    - b) Pons - appears to smooth out respiratory rate
  - 3. Normal respiratory rate (eupnea)
    - a) 12–15 respirations per minute
  - 4. Hyperpnea
    - a) Increased respiratory rate often due to extra oxygen needs
- H. Non-Neural Factors Influencing Respiratory Rate and Depth
  - 1. Physical factors

- a) Increased body temperature
  - b) Exercise
  - c) Talking
  - d) Coughing
  - e) Volition (conscious control)
  - f) Emotional factors
2. Chemical factors: CO<sub>2</sub> levels
- a) The body's need to rid itself of CO<sub>2</sub> is the most important stimulus
  - b) Increased levels of carbon dioxide (and thus, a decreased or acidic pH) in the blood increase the rate and depth of breathing
  - c) Changes in carbon dioxide act directly on the medulla oblongata
3. Chemical factors: oxygen levels
- a) Changes in oxygen concentration in the blood are detected by chemoreceptors in the aorta and common carotid artery
  - b) Information is sent to the medulla
- I. Hyperventilation and Hypoventilation
1. Hyperventilation
- a) Results from increased CO<sub>2</sub> in the blood (acidosis)
  - b) Breathing becomes deeper and more rapid
  - c) Blows off more CO<sub>2</sub> to restore normal blood pH
2. Hypoventilation
- a) Results when blood becomes alkaline (alkalosis)
  - b) Extremely slow or shallow breathing
  - c) Allows CO<sub>2</sub> to accumulate in the blood
- J. Respiratory Disorders:
1. Respiratory Disorders: Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD)
- a) Exemplified by chronic bronchitis and emphysema
  - b) Major causes of death and disability in the United States
  - c) Features of these diseases
    - (1) Patients almost always have a history of smoking

- (2) Labored breathing (dyspnea) becomes progressively more severe
  - (3) Coughing and frequent pulmonary infections are common
  - (4) Most victims are hypoxic, retain carbon dioxide, and have respiratory acidosis
  - (5) Those infected will ultimately develop respiratory failure
2. Respiratory Disorders: Chronic Bronchitis
- a) Mucosa of the lower respiratory passages becomes severely inflamed
  - b) Mucus production increases
  - c) Pooled mucus impairs ventilation and gas exchange
  - d) Risk of lung infection increases
  - e) Pneumonia is common
  - f) Called “blue bloaters” due to hypoxia and cyanosis
3. Respiratory Disorders: Emphysema
- a) Alveoli enlarge as adjacent chambers break through
  - b) Chronic inflammation promotes lung fibrosis
  - c) Airways collapse during expiration
  - d) Patients use a large amount of energy to exhale
  - e) Overinflation of the lungs leads to a permanently expanded barrel chest
  - f) Cyanosis appears late in the disease; sufferers are often called
4. Respiratory Disorders: Lung Cancer
- a) Accounts for one-third of all cancer deaths in the United States
  - b) Increased incidence is associated with smoking
  - c) Three common types
    - (1) Squamous cell carcinoma
    - (2) Adenocarcinoma
    - (3) Small cell carcinoma
- K. Developmental Aspects of the Respiratory System
- 1. Lungs are filled with fluid in the fetus
  - 2. Lungs are not fully inflated with air until two weeks after birth
  - 3. Surfactant is a fatty molecule made by alveolar cells

- a) Lowers alveolar surface tension so that lungs do not collapse
- b) Not present until late in fetal development and may not be present in premature babies
- 4. Appears around 28–30 weeks of pregnancy
- 5. Homeostatic imbalance
  - a) Infant respiratory distress syndrome (IRDS) - surfactant production is inadequate
  - b) Cystic fibrosis - oversecretion of thick mucus clogs the respiratory system
  - c) Respiratory rate changes throughout life
    - (1) Newborns: 40 to 80 respirations per minute
    - (2) Infants: 30 respirations per minute
    - (3) Age 5: 25 respirations per minute
    - (4) Adults: 12 to 18 respirations per minute
    - (5) Rate often increases somewhat with old age
  - d) Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS)
    - (1) Apparently healthy infant stops breathing and dies during sleep
    - (2) Some cases are thought to be a problem of the neural respiratory control center
    - (3) One third of cases appear to be due to heart rhythm abnormalities
    - (4) Recent research shows a genetic component
  - e) Asthma
    - (1) Chronic inflamed hypersensitive bronchiole passages
    - (2) Response to irritants with dyspnea, coughing, and wheezing
  - f) Aging effects
    - (1) Elasticity of lungs decreases
    - (2) Vital capacity decreases
    - (3) Blood oxygen levels decrease
    - (4) Stimulating effects of carbon dioxide decrease
    - (5) Elderly are often hypoxic and exhibit sleep apnea
    - (6) More risks of respiratory tract infection