

**PEPPER SPRAY / TEAR GAS**  
**(OC Spray, Capstun, Freeze, Freeze +, Freeze + P, OC/CS Spray, plus others)**

Level I

**Skill Level:** RN

**Definition:** Post exposure evaluation and treatment of an inmate recently exposed to/sprayed with Oleoresin Capsicum ingredient, and or CS "Tear gas".

Pepper = OC = Oleoresin Capsicum

Tear gas = CS = Chlorobenzylidene Malonitrile

<p><b>Subjective:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "I've been pepper sprayed/Tear gassed".</li> </ul>	<p><b>Assessment:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Alteration in comfort.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Objective:</b></p> <p><b>OC</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sometimes unable to speak more than four words without pausing for breath.</li> <li>• No history of asthma or COPD episode requiring emergency treatment.</li> <li>• Redness of eyes.</li> <li>• Reddened to blistered skin.</li> <li>• Rapid respirations or difficulty breathing.</li> </ul> <p><b>CS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No history of asthma or COPD episode requiring emergency treatment.</li> <li>• Eyelids can spasm shut</li> <li>• Redness of eyes</li> <li>• Reddened to blistered skin</li> <li>• Difficulty breathing – unable to speak more than four words without pausing for breath.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Plan:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Instruct patient to rinse skin/eyes with cool water. Blot eyes with a towel; don't rub.</li> <li>• If possible move patient to well ventilated area. Apply Asthma protocol if patient is wheezing.</li> <li>• Observe patient continuously until respirations are acceptable (respiratory rate less than 20 per minute) and normal speech.</li> <li>• If respirations stable and patient able to talk, request patient be allowed to take a cool shower.</li> <li>• Expect symptoms to last 20 minutes or more.</li> <li>• Contact practitioner if history of severe asthma or COPD symptoms requiring emergency treatment.</li> <li>• Contact practitioner if vitals or clinical status are worsening or not gradually improving.</li> </ul>

Nursing Education:

1. Symptoms may improve if patient can shower with cool water.
2. Have patient sit while showering if possible.
3. Be careful to avoid exposing yourself to the agent.
4. Respiratory problems from CS exposure may not peak until 12 hours post-exposure, but should develop slowly if at all. Consider recheck depending on severity of patient symptoms.
5. OC and CS usually do not affect the heart.

**APPROVED:**

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Medical Services Manager

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Date

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Chief Medical Officer

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

*Steve Shelton M.D.*

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Medical Director

*2/24/2015*  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Date Effective: 3/2015

Revised: February 2015