

Bronchopulmonary Dysplasia Information Sheet

Bronchopulmonary Dysplasia (BPD) is a lung disease that most commonly occurs in premature infants as a complication of respiratory distress syndrome (RDS). RDS is a condition in which a baby's lungs do not breathe on their own. A respirator pushes oxygen into the lungs to prevent brain damage and to save their lives. Over time, the pressure from the respirator and the oxygen can injure a newborn's airways.

Infants with severe BPD may have epilepsy, deafness, blindness and cerebral palsy. Children with BPD often develop Gastroesophageal Reflux Disease (GERD) and occasionally develop complications of the circulatory system, such as high blood pressure.

Effects of medications include dehydration and low sodium levels from diuretics, kidney stones, hearing problems and low potassium and calcium levels.

Symptoms

Symptoms vary among individuals, but may include rapid and shallow breathing, wheezing, cough, movement of the chest and abdomen in opposite directions with every breath, abnormal posture and increased susceptibility to respiratory tract infections.

Educational Implications

Some children have serious chronic respiratory difficulties for the rest of their lives, requiring oxygen therapy on a regular basis at school, home or a health care facility.

Some children have a limited tolerance for physical exercise, and may need special considerations in school activities.

Inform parents of any outbreaks of communicable diseases, particularly respiratory infections, so that they can take preventive measures.

Since children with BPD typically breathe at a faster rate, expending more energy, they require additional supplemental nutrients and high-calorie food. School kitchen staff should discuss the student's dietary needs with parents.

Children who required long-term mechanical ventilation during their first years may show signs of language delay.

They may also show signs of growth delay due, in part, to the effects of poor nutritional status. Reduced height and weight are typically most evident in the middle childhood and adolescent years when body image and acceptance by peers become important issues.

Children with BPD often need ongoing therapy, such as chest physiotherapy and medication therapy, on a regular basis.

Educational Options

Those students whose bronchopulmonary dysplasia adversely affects their educational performance may benefit from special education under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). To qualify under IDEA, a student must meet eligibility criteria in one of thirteen specific disability categories. Under IDEA, a student with a disability is entitled to a free appropriate public education (FAPE) and an individualized education program, including individual goals, objectives, related services, accommodations and modifications.

Students that do not qualify for services under IDEA may qualify under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. To qualify under Section 504, a student must have a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities (for example learning, breathing, thinking, concentrating, walking, bodily functions). Under Section 504, a student is entitled to equal opportunity, and may qualify for a Section 504 plan that provides regular or special education and related aids and services.

A student with a health condition who does not require special instruction and related services can receive, as appropriate, a wide range of supports in the general education classroom, including accommodations, individualized health plans (IHP), emergency care plans (ECP) and local education agency supports.