Skill Sheet: Management of Chest Trauma

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conditions</th>
<th>The candidate should perform this procedure on a simulated patient under existing indoor, ambulance, or outdoor lighting, temperature, and weather conditions.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Indications</td>
<td>Patient who has experienced a medical or trauma mechanism to the chest that results in loss of normal lung expansion, either due to negative pressure loss (pneumothorax) or excessive positive pressure (tension pneumothorax)</td>
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<td>Red Flags</td>
<td>Increased possibility of infection. Application of an occlusive dressing can result in forming a tension pneumothorax; needle decompression is unlikely to reduce hemothorax, and will create an open pneumothorax</td>
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Don appropriate standard precautions  
Apply supplemental oxygen and/or ventilate patient with bag mask

**Evaluate patient for chest trauma**  
Confirm trauma mechanism or medical condition that could cause a open pneumothorax or tension  
EXPOSE and INSPECT neck, anterior and posterior chest wall for signs of severe respiratory compromise, including tachypnea, accessory muscle use, asymmetrical chest rise and presence of  
If open wound is seen, apply direct pressure to site with gloved hand immediately  
PALPATE chest wall for cage integrity, presence of subcutaneous air, asymmetrical chest  
AUSCULTATE for unequal lung sounds bilaterally along midaxillary lines

**Occlusive Dressing**  
Select Occlusive Dressing  
Commercial occlusive dressing (Vaseline gauze, Asherman chest seal, etc.), or Improvised occlusive dressing (plastic bag, plastic wrap, plastic bandage/gauze wrappers, etc.)  
Wipe away excess blood  
Prepare site with iodine and/ or alcohol

**Apply Occlusive Dressing**  
Immediately occlude wound with gloved hand  
Control bleeding with direct pressure, as needed  
Place occlusive dressing and tape securely to skin (may tape on only three sides to leave a “flutter” valve to allow air escape)  
If tension pneumothorax develops, untape 4th side and reassess.  
Monitor patient for any changes  
Continue transport

**Critical Criteria:**  
___ Use appropriate standard precautions  
___ Identify tension pneumothorax quickly  
___ Recognize developing tension pneumothorax after occlusive dressing application