

Watch Out *for...*

Deceptive Chest X-Rays When Checking NGTs

Watch Out Notice: 01

Date: 30 May 2013

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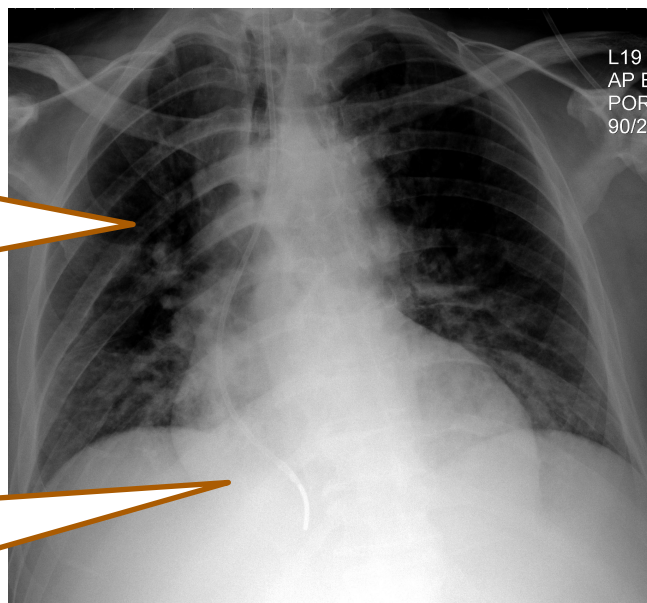
What Happened?

A patient in DCCQ had a chest x-ray done to check NGT position. It was cleared as safe to use because the tip appeared “below the diaphragm”

After giving drugs down the NGT, the patient desaturated quickly.

The NGT was actually at the base of the right lung, behind the dome of the diaphragm on x-ray.

Looking carefully, you can see the NGT following the right main bronchus inside the chest.



The Facts:

- The commonest way to harm patients with a misplaced NGT is by misinterpreting a chest x-ray¹
- Chest x-rays can be deceptive and it is not enough just to see the NGT tip appear “below the diaphragm”.

Protect Your Patients:

- Don't rely on the NGT tip appearing “below the diaphragm” on chest x-ray.
- Make sure that your x-ray meets **all four** of these criteria:¹
 1. The NGT follows the oesophagus and avoids the contours of the bronchi.
 2. The NGT clearly bisects the carina or bronchi.
 3. The NGT crosses the diaphragm in the midline.
 4. The NGT tip is clearly visible below the left hemi-diaphragm.

Reference

1. Reducing the harm caused by misplaced nasogastric feeding tubes in adults, children and infants. NPSA 2011 (NPSA/2011/PSA002)