What Does the Mucus Color Mean?
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# Mucus Color Guide

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Color</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Clear</td>
<td>Mucus is supposed to be clear. Clear mucus is healthy mucus.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>White mucus could indicate that an allergy or sinus infection is present. Another cause could be cold temperatures or low humidity climates. These conditions can cause mucus to thicken and turn cloudy/white in appearance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yellow</td>
<td>Yellow mucus is a sign that your body may be starting to fight off some type of infection.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Green</td>
<td>Green mucus is a sure sign of a viral or bacterial infection.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pink</td>
<td>When a patient has pink, frothy secretions, this is always a sign of pulmonary edema. The pink color comes from fluid in the lungs. Definitely remember this one for the TMC Exam.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Red or Brown</td>
<td>Red or Brown sputum means that there is blood mixed with the mucus. This can be normal in the case of breathing dry air or irritation to the mucus membrane. However, if the patient is coughing up blood, you should notify the physician immediately.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>Black mucus indicates that the patient is a smoker or has been breathing polluted air.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
So there you have it! Thank you so much for downloading and reading through this quick cheat sheet on mucus colors.

Hopefully you found this information to be helpful.

As I’m sure you already know, there so many different topics that the NBRC requires for you to know in order to pass the TMC Exam.

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Breathe easy, my friend! 🙏

Johnny Lung

Johnny Lung RRT
One more thing!

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Let's go through an example so that you can see what I'm talking about.

Here’s an example of a TMC Practice Question:

A new patient just finished a cardiothoracic surgery procedure. Upon assessment, you noticed that the patient has a paradoxical pulse. Which of the following conditions is most likely?

A. Pericarditis  
B. COPD exacerbation  
C. Myocardial infarction  
D. Cardiac tamponade

Do you know the answer? Not to worry, let's break it down!
The explanation that you get along with each practice question is the most important part!

To get this one right, first, you have to know exactly what is a paradoxical pulse.

A paradoxical pulse, aka pulsus paradoxus, is when the pulse or blood pressure varies or changes during inhalation and exhalation. It is most often seen during a tension pneumothorax or cardiac tamponade and often occurs when the patient has a flail chest.

Cardiac tamponade is an accumulation of fluid within the pericardial sac. One of the most common side effects of cardiac tamponade is a paradoxical pulse.

So on the TMC Exam, if you get a question where the patient has a chest trauma injury, be sure to remember that a pneumothorax, flail chest, cardiac tamponade, and thus pulsus paradoxus may occur.

None of the other answer choices make sense in this situation, so we know that the correct answer has to be D.

**The correct answer is:** D. Cardiac tamponade

Well, what did you think? Do you see how valuable this information can be?!

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