NOMAS®
(Neonatal Oral-Motor Assessment Scale)
developed by Marjorie Meyer Palmer, M.A.

Administration*

Follow these steps to evaluation of sucking patterns:

1. Spontaneous initiation of suck

2. Rate Change

3. Type of Pattern
   - Immature (normal)
   - Transitional (disorganized)
   - Mature (normal or disorganized)
   - No pattern=too much variability in # of sucks/burst

4. Consistent/inconsistent Degree of Jaw Depression

5. Expression/Suction

6. Direction of Tongue Movement

7. Tongue Configuration

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### JAW

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Normal</th>
<th>Disorganization</th>
<th>Dysfunction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>____ Consistent degree of jaw depression</td>
<td>____ Inconsistent degree of jaw depression</td>
<td>____ Excessively wide excursions that interrupt the intra-oral seal on the nipple</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>____ Rhythmical excursions</td>
<td>____ Arrhythmical jaw movements</td>
<td>____ Minimal excursions; clenching</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>____ Spontaneous jaw excursions occur upon tactile presentation of the nipple up to 30 minutes prior to a feed</td>
<td>____ Difficulty initiating movements:</td>
<td>____ Absence of movement (% of time)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>____ Inability to latch on</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>____ Small, tremor-like start-up movements noted</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>____ Does not respond to initial cue of nipple until jiggled</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>____ Persistence of immature suck pattern beyond appropriate age</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Under 40 weeks PC (transitional suck)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>____ Jaw movement occurs at the rate of approximately one per second (1/2 the rate of NNS)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>____ Sufficient closure on the nipple during the expression phase to express fluid from the nipple</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### TONGUE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Normal</th>
<th>Disorganization</th>
<th>Dysfunction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>____ Cupped tongue configuration (tongue groove) maintained during sucking</td>
<td>____ Excessive protrusion beyond labial border during extension phase of sucking without interrupting sucking rhythm</td>
<td>____ Flaccid; flattened with absent tongue groove</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>____ Extension-elevation-retraction movements occur in anterior-posterior direction</td>
<td>____ Arrhythmical movements</td>
<td>____ Retracted; humped and pulled back into oro-pharynx</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>____ Rhythmical movements</td>
<td>____ Unable to sustain suckle pattern for two minutes due to:</td>
<td>____ Asymmetry; lateral tongue deviation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>____ Movements occur at the rate of one per second</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>____ Liquid is sucked efficiently into the oro-pharynx for swallow</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>____ Habituation</td>
<td>____ Excessive protrusion beyond labial border before/after nipple insertion with our/down movement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>____ Poor Respiration</td>
<td>____ Absence of movement (% of time)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>____ Fatigue</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
NOMAS® ONLINE: Day 1 (Neonatal Oral-Motor Assessment Scale)
Reference List: updated 10/17


Listed in the Section on Pediatrics in the List of Assessment Tools at [www.pediatricapta.org/pdfs/assessscreen tools 2.pdf](http://www.pediatricapta.org/pdfs/assessscreen tools 2.pdf)