10.8: X Glossary

**Accessory muscles:** Muscles other than the diaphragm and intercostal muscles that may be used for labored breathing.

**Apnea:** Absence of respirations.

**Atelectasis:** Alveoli or an entire lung is collapsed, allowing no air movement.

**Barrel-chested:** An equal AP-to-transverse diameter that often occurs in patients with COPD due to hyperinflation of the lungs.

**Bradypnea:** Decreased respiratory rate or slow breath less than normal range according to the patient’s age.

**Bronchial breath sounds:** High-pitched hollow sounds heard over trachea and the larynx.

**Bronchovesicular sounds:** Mixture of low- and high-pitched sounds heard over major bronchi.

**Clubbing:** A change in the configuration where the tips of the nails curve around the fingertips, usually caused by chronic low levels of oxygen in the blood.

**Crackles:** Also referred to as “rales”; sound like popping or crackling noises during inspiration. Associated with inflammation and fluid accumulation in the alveoli.

**Crepitus:** Air trapped under a subcutaneous layer of the skin; creates a popping or crackling sensation as the area is palpated.

**Cyanosis:** Bluish discoloration of the skin, lips, and nail beds. It is an indication of decreased perfusion and
oxygenation.

**Dyspnea:** A subjective feeling of breathlessness.

**Hemoptysis:** Blood-tinged mucus secretions from the lungs.

**Hypercapnia:** Increased carbon dioxide levels in the blood.

**Hypoxemia:** Decreased levels of oxygen in the blood.

**Kyphosis:** Outward curvature of the back; often described as “hunchback.”

**Orthopnea:** Breathlessness or a feeling of shortness of breath when lying in a reclined position.

**Pallor:** A reduced amount of oxyhemoglobin in the skin or mucous membranes and causes skin and mucous membranes to present with a pale skin color.

**Rales:** Another term used for crackles.

**Respiration:** Includes ventilation and gas exchange at the alveolar level where blood is oxygenated and carbon dioxide is removed.

**Retractions:** The “pulling in” of muscles between the ribs or in the neck when breathing, indicating difficulty breathing or respiratory distress.

**Stridor:** High-pitched crowing sounds heard over the upper airway and larynx indicating obstruction.

**Tachypnea:** Rapid and often shallow breathing greater than normal range according to the patient’s age.

**Ventilation:** The mechanical movement of air into and out of the lungs.

**Vesicular sounds:** Low-pitched soft sounds like “rustling leaves” heard over alveoli and small bronchial airways.

**Wheeze:** High-pitched sounds heard on expiration or inspiration associated with bronchoconstriction or bronchospasm.