

Types of Shock

Cheat Sheet

Hey there, friend!

Thanks for downloading this cheat sheet!

Keep it handy when you go to clinical, skills lab, lecture class, or any other time you need to remember or study the different types of shock.

[And if you need more help with pathophysiology and med-surg in nursing school, be sure to check out this playlist on YouTube.](#)

Thanks for being here, friend! And thanks for allowing me to help you along your nursing school journey.

All my best,
Christina

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WHAT IS SHOCK?

When you hear the term, "shock," you should simply think of a lack of blood flow that can lead to organ failure.

When someone is in shock, their blood is not flowing properly for one reason or another, and the blood can't get to where it needs to go (the organs!)

And when the organs don't get the blood, oxygen, and nutrients they need, they get very unhappy, and can start to fail.

TYPES OF SHOCK:

There are 4 primary types of shock:

1. Cardiogenic Shock
2. Distributive Shock
3. Obstructive Shock
4. Hypovolemic Shock

Each type of shock is caused by different things and follows its own pathophysiology.

We'll cover the pathophysiology and causes of each of these types of shock here in this cheat sheet.

Cardiogenic shock

During cardiogenic shock, there is something wrong with the heart itself.

The heart is not able to pump enough blood out to the body, leading to a lack of blood flow to the organs.

Cardiogenic shock can be caused by things like:

- Valve problems: where the heart valves aren't working properly to pump blood out of the heart.
- Cardiac arrhythmias: where the heartbeat is not consistent, and therefore, the blood flow to the body is not consistent, which can lead to a lack of blood flow.
- Myocardial infarction: where the heart itself isn't getting enough blood because one or more of the coronary arteries are blocked. Since the heart isn't getting the blood it needs to function, it has a harder time pumping blood to the body.

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Distributive shock

When you think of distributive shock, you should always think, "vasodilation," which means that the blood vessels are dilated.

During distributive shock, there is so much vasodilation throughout the body that the blood simply cannot get to the organs.

In this case, there is the same amount of blood in the body as there was before, but that blood just can't get to the organs as well because the blood vessels are dilated.

The biggest cause of distributive shock is sepsis because sepsis causes a lot of vasodilation.

[If you need a refresher on the pathophysiology of sepsis and how it can cause vasodilation, be sure to check this video out.](#)

Obstructive shock

Obstructive shock occurs when there is something blocking (or *obstructing*) the blood flow as it is trying to get to the organs.

In these cases, there is something that is blocking the blood between the heart and the body.

Obstructive shock can be caused by things like:

- Pulmonary embolism: where there is a clot in the lungs. This physically blocks the flow of blood to the lungs.
- Cardiac tamponade: where there is fluid buildup around the heart, which is blocking the heart from pumping as much blood out as it should.
- Tension pneumothorax: where there is so much air in the chest cavity that it puts pressure on the heart, and the heart can't pump as much blood out to the organs.

Hypovolemic shock

During hypovolemia, there is an overall lack of fluid in the body, and this has a great impact on the blood. If there is less fluid in the body, there is less blood volume in the body.

During hypovolemia, there is simply not enough blood available to perfuse the organs.

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Hypovolemic shock can be caused by things like:

- Dehydration: there is not enough fluid entering the body to stay hydrated
- Hemorrhage: there is actual blood and fluid loss
- Vomiting: there is fluid loss due to vomiting
- Diarrhea: there is fluid loss due to diarrhea
- Edema: there is fluid loss due to a fluid shift into the surrounding tissues, instead of the blood vessels (third-spacing)
- Diabetes: there is fluid loss because the body is trying to get rid of excess glucose through the urine, and fluid goes with it

FINAL THOUGHTS...

I know shock and all the other med-surg disorders can be difficult to understand.

But remember, friend, you know more than you think you do! And you will absolutely PASS nursing school. Believe in yourself!

[And if you want some great study tips to help you learn med-surg faster, check out these videos here.](#)