

## Airway/Superior Vena Caval Obstruction

**Mediastinal Mass** may occur in children with leukemia, lymphoma, Hodgkin's disease, neuroblastoma and germ cell tumour.

Because the tracheal cartilage in children is soft the trachea is easily compressed resulting in airway obstruction. The superior vena cava may also be obstructed causing distension of the veins draining the head and neck and increased venous and intracranial pressure.

**Obstruction of the trachea or SVC is an extreme emergency** and should be managed as follows:

- Sit patient up and keep calm
- Administer oxygen if necessary
- Avoid painful or distressing procedures
- Urgent consultation with anesthetist, pediatric oncologist, pediatric surgeon, pediatric intensivist
- Diagnostic procedures should only be performed if considered safe by the anesthetist. It is sometimes necessary to treat empirically with steroids, chemotherapy or radiation but a biopsy should then be obtained as soon as the airway is considered secure