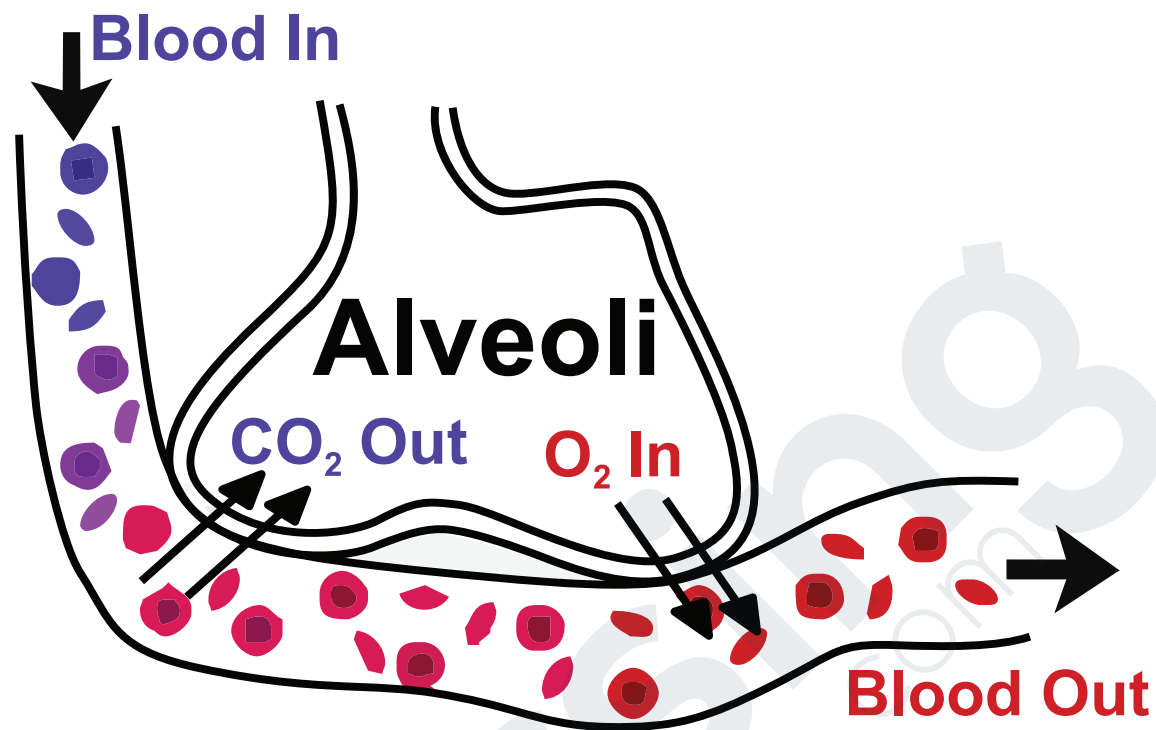


GAS EXCHANGE



By helix84 (en:Image:Alveoli.jpg) [GFDL (<http://www.gnu.org/copyleft/fdl.html>), CC-BY-SA-3.0 (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/>) or CC BY 2.5 (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/2.5/>)], via Wikimedia Commons

Gas exchange occurs in the alveoli - the functional unit of the lungs. Deoxygenated blood enters the capillaries surrounding the alveoli, O₂ enters the bloodstream and CO₂ exits into the alveoli to be exhaled.

Causes of Poor Gas Exchange

- Atelectasis
- Hyper or Hypoventilation
- Poor Airflow (airway swelling or bronchoconstriction)
- Pulmonary Edema
- Pulmonary Embolism
- Vasoconstriction
- Low blood volume

Priority Interventions

- Re-inflate alveoli
- Treat cause to restore normal breathing pattern
- Give meds to open airways
- Diuretics to decrease fluid in lungs
- Thrombolytic or Thrombectomy
- Vasodilators
- Replace lost blood volume