Musculoskeletal Disease GRG

GRG: MG-MD (ISC GRG)

MCG Health
General Recovery Care
30th Edition
Medical Admission Case Management GRG GRG

Note: An appropriate Optimal Recovery Guideline (ORG) should be identified and used whenever possible. This General Recovery Guideline (GRG) is intended to aid only in situations in which no ORG appears applicable.

Care Planning - Inpatient Admission and Alternatives

Clinical Indications for Admission to Inpatient Care

- Hospital admission is needed for appropriate care of the patient because of **1 or more** of the following:
  - Muscle, bone, or orthopedic device infection (eg, nonjoint periprosthetic infection)[A] and **1 or more** of the following(1)(2)(3)(4):
    - IV antibiotics needed that cannot be initiated in other than inpatient setting (eg, patient too unstable or home infusion not feasible)(2)(5)(6)(7)
    - Drainage planned that requires inpatient care (drain placement or repetitive aspirations)(2)(6)
    - Debridement needed that requires inpatient care (eg, frequency, complex or frequent dressing changes)(2)(5)(6)(7)(8)

- Inpatient monitoring needed due to clinical instability or risk for deterioration (eg, Hemodynamic instability, Bacteremia, Altered mental status that is severe or persistent, compartment syndrome)(2)

− Vertebral fracture[B] and **1 or more** of the following(9)(10)(11):
- Instability or impending instability of vertebral body or column(10)
- New neurologic deficit(9)
- Altered mental status
- Concomitant cranial fractures
- Hemodynamic instability
- Malalignment (eg, posttraumatic misalignment, severe kyphosis with sagittal plane deformity)
- Major injury requiring inpatient care (nature of injury necessitates inpatient treatment or monitoring)
- Severe pain requiring acute inpatient management (9)

− Nonvertebral fracture, dislocation, or other musculoskeletal injury and **1 or more** of the following(5)(12)(13)(14)(15)(16)(17)(18):
- Compartment syndrome(5)(15)(19)(20)(21)
- Major injury requiring inpatient care (nature of injury necessitates inpatient treatment or monitoring) (eg, vascular injury, open fracture)(5)(15)(22)
- Failure to achieve or maintain adequate reduction(5)(15)
- Severe pain requiring acute inpatient management (5)

− Rheumatologic disease (eg, systemic lupus erythematosus, rheumatoid arthritis, spondyloarthritis) exacerbation or related finding and **1 or more** of the following:
- Exacerbation that requires inpatient treatment (eg, IV immunosuppression)(23)(24)(25)
- Severe pain requiring acute inpatient management (26)(27)
- Severe infection (eg, CNS infection, bacteremia, Hemodynamic instability)(25)
- Respiratory complication that requires inpatient care (pulmonary hemorrhage or significant hemoptysis, new Hypoxemia, persistent dyspnea)(27)(28)(29)(30)
- Hematologic complication, as indicated by **1 or more** of the following(31)(32):
  - Coagulopathy with bleeding such that inpatient treatment or monitoring needed
  - Thrombosis and inpatient treatment (eg, Inpatient anticoagulation needed) or monitoring needed
  - Thrombotic thrombocytopenic purpura(33)
- Acute kidney injury (stage 2) (23)
- Acute renal failure (stage 3 acute kidney injury) (23)
- Cerebritis with seizures, psychosis, Altered mental status, or other acute neurologic abnormality (eg, transverse myelitis, cauda equina)(23)(27)(34)
- Pericardial effusion that is enlarging(23)(30)
- Evidence of actual or impending cardiac tamponade (eg, Hemodynamic instability, worsening dyspnea, increased jugular venous pressure, pulsus paradox, electrical alternans, or echocardiogram findings)(23)(27)(35)(36)
- Vertebral abnormality, with inpatient monitoring needed for myelopathy (eg, atlantoaxial subluxation in ankylosing spondylitis)(26)(27)

− Vasculitis and **1 or more** of the following:
- Hemodynamic instability (23)(37)(38)(39)
- Exacerbation that requires inpatient treatment (eg, IV immunosuppression, plasma exchange)(23)(37)(39)(40)(41)(42)
- Pulmonary hemorrhage or significant hemoptysis(23)(40)(43)
- CNS vasculitis with seizures, psychosis, Altered mental status that is severe or persistent, infarction, bleeding, or other acute neurologic abnormality(23)(43)(44)(45)
- Tissue or organ ischemia (eg, gastrointestinal ischemia, gangrene, myocardial ischemia) or dysfunction (eg, left ventricular dysfunction, retro-orbital disease, mesenteric involvement)(23)(37)(39)(40)(43)(46)(47)(48)

- Acute kidney injury (stage 2) (23)(40)
- Acute renal failure (stage 3 acute kidney injury) (23)(40)
- Severe pain requiring acute inpatient management (23)(40)
- Other significant complication of vasculitis necessitating inpatient care (eg, stroke, limb-threatening arterial disease, upper airway obstruction)(40)

− Crystal arthropathy (eg, gout, pseudogout) and **1 or more** of the following:
- Severe pain requiring acute inpatient management (49)(50)
- Exacerbation that requires inpatient treatment (eg, IV treatment)(49)(50)

− Rhabdomyolysis and **1 or more** of the following:
- Acute kidney injury (stage 2) (51)(52)
- Acute renal failure (stage 3 acute kidney injury) (51)(52)
- Need for IV hydration beyond observation care[C](51)(52)(53)
- Inability to maintain oral hydration(51)(52)
- Altered mental status that is severe or persistent (52)
- Severe electrolyte abnormalities requiring inpatient care (51)(52)

− Myopathy or myositis (noninfectious) and **1 or more** of the following:
- Exacerbation that requires inpatient treatment (eg, IV immunosuppression)(54)(55)(56)
- Acute impaired ability to swallow(54)(56)
- Respiratory deterioration with inpatient monitoring needed (eg, concern for respiratory failure)(54)(56)(57)

- Postamputation complication (eg, infection, dehiscence) that requires inpatient care (eg, Hemodynamic instability, bacteremia, complex dressing changes)(58)(59)(60)
- Severe pain requiring acute inpatient management due to musculoskeletal condition(61)
- **Musculoskeletal Disease** condition, symptom, or finding for which observation care has failed or is not considered appropriate. See General Criteria: Observation Care ISC, General Admission Criteria GRG, or Pediatric General Admission Criteria GRG guideline as appropriate.

Supplemental Medicare Criteria

Note: These criteria are to be considered for Medicare patients if none of the standard Clinical Indications for Admission to Inpatient Care apply.

- Patient with Medicare coverage requires inpatient admission, as indicated by **1 or more** of the following(62):
  - Admitting clinician expects patient to require hospital care for less than 2 midnights but, based on complex medical factors documented in medical record, judges that inpatient care is necessary (case-by-case exception). The medical record must contain sufficient documentation to make clear the rationale for the exception.
  - Patient has need for intubation and mechanical ventilation that is new (ie, did not present to hospital already on mechanical ventilation).
  - Treatment plan for hospital admission includes procedure designated by CMS as inpatient only (ie, on Inpatient Only List).
  - Patient has already received medically necessary hospital care that meets 2-midnight benchmark (excluding activities such as triage/intake, delays in provision of care, or time added due to patient or family convenience). The medical record must contain sufficient documentation to make clear the medical necessity for hospital care across 2 or more midnights.

Alternatives to Admission

- Alternatives may include(10)(12):
  - Outpatient care in emergency department, observation care (see General Criteria: Observation Care ISC guideline as appropriate), rapid treatment site, urgent care center, or medical office

- History and physical evaluation of stability(5)
- Pharmacologic treatment of pain (eg, NSAIDS, opioids)(5)(63)
- Disease-modifying antirheumatic drugs (eg, tumor necrosis factor inhibitors, interleukin-17 inhibitors, Janus kinase inhibitor)(23)(40)(54)(64)(65)
- For isolated patellar dislocation, conservative therapy (eg, ice, elevation, compression)(66)(67)
- X-rays, CT scan, MRI, myelogram, and bone scan(2)
- Casting, bracing, and orthoses(5)(9)(63)
- Nonoperative management of open fractures including wound irrigation, antibiotics, and wound closure(68)
- Physical therapy(26)
- Training with walker, cane, or crutches
- Referral for outpatient arthroscopic procedure (eg, synovectomy) or other evaluation
- Corticosteroid injection, including epidural corticosteroid(50)(69)
- Day care program for severe arthritis

- Home care
  - Pain management
  - Physical therapy and occupational therapy(26)
  - IV or oral antibiotics(70)
  - Anti-inflammatory agents or immunosuppressive drugs(26)
  - Traction
  - Instruction on orthopedic equipment use or lifestyle activity changes
- Recovery facility
  - Pain management
  - Physical therapy and occupational therapy
  - IV antibiotics
  - Traction
  - Complex wound care

Hospitalization

General Recovery Course

Stage	Level of Care	Clinical Status	Interventions
1	• ICU or intermediate care[D] • Social Determinants of Health Assessment • Discharge planning. See Discharge Planning Tool SR.	• **Clinical Indications met[E]**	• Inpatient interventions as needed
2	• Floor • Social Determinants of Health Assessment	• **No ICU or intermediate care needs**	• Inpatient interventions continue • Transition to oral routes

3	• **Activity level acceptable** • Social Determinants of Health Assessment • Floor to discharge • **Complete discharge planning**	• **Hemodynamic stability** • **Temperature status acceptable** • **No infection, or status acceptable** • **C-reactive protein stable, declining, or not indicated** • **Respiratory status acceptable** • **Neurologic status acceptable** • **Vascular, soft tissue, and wound status acceptable** • **Pain and nausea absent or adequately managed** • **Fracture or injury absent or status acceptable** • **Rheumatologic and vasculitic conditions absent or acceptable for next level of care** • **General Discharge Criteria met**	• **Intake acceptable** • **No inpatient interventions needed**

(1)(71)(72)(73)

Recovery Milestones are indicated in **bold**.

Benchmark Length of Stay (BLOS): Access diagnosis and procedure code-specific BLOS via Search functions.

Discharge Criteria

- Continued inpatient stay is needed until **1 or more** of the following are present:
  - Acceptable patient status for next level of care is achieved.
  - **ALL** of the following are present:
    - Hemodynamic stability, as indicated by **1 or more** of the following:
      - Hemodynamic abnormalities at baseline or acceptable for next level of care
      - Patient hemodynamically stable, as indicated by **ALL** of the following(74)(75):
        - Tachycardia absent
        - Hypotension absent
        - No evidence of inadequate perfusion (eg, no myocardial ischemia)
        - No other hemodynamic abnormalities (eg, no Orthostatic hypotension)
    - Temperature status acceptable, as indicated by **1 or more** of the following(76)(77)(78):
      - Temperature less than 100.5 degrees F (38.1 degrees C) (oral) and greater than 96.8 degrees F (36 degrees C) (rectal)
      - Temperature as expected for disease process and appropriate for management at next level of care
    - No infection, or status acceptable, as indicated by **1 or more** of the following(77)(78)(79)(80)(81):
      - No infection present
      - Infection status acceptable for next level of care, as indicated by **ALL** of the following(82):
        - WBC count normal, stable, or declining with treatment
        - Adequate treatment performable at next level of care
        - Organism and sensitivities identified, or adequate clinical response to empiric therapy
        - Repeat cultures negative or not needed
    - C-reactive protein stable, declining, or not indicated

- Respiratory status acceptable, as indicated by **ALL** of the following(83)(84)(85)(86):
  - Patient breathing comfortably (or near baseline) and able to protect airway (eg, able to handle secretions)
  - Tachypnea absent
  - Oxygen saturation greater than 90%, near baseline, or measurement not indicated for condition
  - Supplemental oxygen or respiratory treatments not needed or are performable at next level of care
  - Airflow measurements greater than 60% of predicted, at stable baseline, or measurement not indicated for condition
  - Partial pressure of carbon dioxide and pH normal, at stable baseline, or measurement not indicated for condition
- Neurologic status acceptable, as indicated by neurologic function and mental status being **1 or more** of the following(87)(88):
  - Normal
  - Baseline
  - Appropriate for next level of care
- Renal function acceptable, as indicated by **1 or more** of the following(89)(90)(91):
  - Renal function normal (GFR of 90 mL/min/1.73m^2 (1.50 mL/sec/1.73m^2) or more) eGFR - Adult Calculator eGFR - Pediatric Calculator
  - Renal function that is **ALL** of the following:
    - Impaired (estimated GFR less than 90 mL/min/1.73m^2 (1.50 mL/sec/1.73m^2)) but stable or improving eGFR - Adult Calculator eGFR - Pediatric Calculator
    - Appropriate for management at next level of care
  - Renal function at baseline and appropriate for management at next level of care
  - Dialysis needed and performable at next level of care
- Vascular, soft tissue, and wound status acceptable, as indicated by **1 or more** of the following(21)(92)(93)(94):
  - No vascular, soft tissue, or wound problems
  - Status acceptable, as indicated by **ALL** of the following:
    - No significant ischemia
    - No Bacteremia
    - No evidence of compartment syndrome
    - Neuromotor function at baseline or expected level of recovery and appropriate for management at next level of care
    - No new wound dehiscence or hematoma that cannot be managed at next level of care
    - Tissue necrosis absent, or treatment plan appropriate for next level of care
    - Vascular, soft tissue, and wound management appropriate for next level of care
- Pain and nausea absent or adequately managed, as indicated by **1 or more** of the following(95)(96)(97)(98)(99):
  - No pain or nausea
  - Minimal discomfort on oral medications
  - Pain and nausea managed on regimen performable at next level of care
- Fracture or injury absent or status acceptable, as indicated by **1 or more** of the following:
  - No injuries
  - Injury stable, as indicated by **ALL** of the following(5):
    - Fractures, joints, and injuries stabilized as needed (eg, cast, orthoses)
    - Neurologic deficit absent, at baseline, stable, or improving
    - Treatment at next level of care appropriate
- Rheumatologic and vasculitic conditions absent or acceptable for next level of care

- Activity level acceptable, as indicated by **1 or more** of the following:
  - Patient ambulatory and can perform ADL as appropriate for age and development
  - Activity at baseline
  - Activity level acceptable for next level of care
- Intake acceptable, as indicated by **1 or more** of the following(100):
  - Oral hydration, medications, and diet
  - Enteral hydration, medications, and diet
  - Administration routes performable at next level of care
- No inpatient interventions needed; examples include:
  - Vital signs, neurologic signs, or vascular checks more often than feasible at next level of care
  - Bone or joint debridement planned within 24 hours
  - Drain care: drains in place with high-volume output requiring continuing observation and care that cannot be managed at next level of care
  - Cell pheresis or apheresis in unstable patient
  - Coagulopathy treatment with plasma or platelet transfusions
- General Discharge Criteria GRG met or Pediatric General Discharge Criteria GRG met (if either is relevant or necessary for patient's condition)

Case Management

See Medical Admission Case Management GRG GRG for further information.

Discharge Destination

- Post-hospital levels of admission may include:
  - Home.
  - Home healthcare. See Medical Admission Home Care GRG HC or Geriatric Admission Home Care GRG HC for further information.
  - Recovery facility care. See Medical Admission Recovery Facility Care GRG RFC or Geriatric Admission Recovery Facility Care GRG RFC for further information.
  - Inpatient rehabilitation facility. See Inpatient Rehabilitation Facility (IRF) Admission Recovery Facility Care GRG RFC for further information.

Evidence Summary

Criteria

The evidence for the clinical indications found in this guideline includes 32 published peer reviewed articles, 2 specialty society or other evidence-based guidelines, 1 Cochrane systematic review, and 26 book sections.

Rationale

Use of this MCG care guideline helps the clinician identify patient-specific complex clinical factors that make it reasonable to expect a necessity for hospital care across 2 or more midnights. The evidence-based clinical criteria assist the clinician in the decision to appropriately admit a patient to inpatient care. For Medicare enrollees, MCG care guidelines also support the clinician in the decision to appropriately admit a patient to inpatient care when there is not an expectation of 2 or more midnights of hospital care (eg, CMS' Two-Midnight Rule exceptions).

Use of these evidence-based clinical criteria to support decision making around the need for inpatient treatment is of clinical benefit to the patient and is crucial for quality patient care. Use of evidence-based clinical criteria ensures patients receive the most appropriate care for their specific condition, reduces unnecessary risks, promotes recovery, and provides a standard that can reduce disparities in care. Evidence-based clinical criteria not only help align treatment decisions with best practice, but they can also help reduce unwarranted variation in care by fostering consistency and equality in healthcare provision across regions and facilities. Appropriate use of the evidence-based clinical criteria in conjunction with the Supplemental Medicare Criteria ensures Medicare patients receive full access to Medicare benefits (eg, inpatient care), without risk of delay or decreased access, based on variables such as clinical severity of illness, length of provision of medically necessary hospital-level care, or satisfaction of specified Medicare criteria as directed by CMS. Use of these criteria will help ensure that the patient receives necessary care in the appropriate setting.

Related CMS Coverage Guidance

This guideline supplements but does not replace, modify, or supersede existing Medicare regulations or applicable National Coverage Determinations (NCDs) or Local Coverage Determinations (LCDs).

Code of Federal Regulations (CFR): 42 CFR 412.3(62); 42 CFR 419.22(101); 42 CFR 422.101(102)

Internet-Only Manual (IOM) Citations: CMS IOM Publication 100-02, Medicare Benefit Policy Manual, Chapter 1 - Inpatient Hospital Services Covered Under Part A(103); CMS IOM Publication 100-02, Medicare Benefit Policy Manual, Chapter 6 - Hospital Services Covered Under Part B(104); CMS IOM Publication 100-02, Medicare Benefit Policy Manual, Chapter 15 - Covered Medical and Other Health Services(105); CMS IOM Publication 100-08, Medicare Program Integrity Manual, Chapter 6, Section 6.5 - Medical Review of Inpatient Hospital Claims for Part A Payment(106)

Medicare Coverage Determinations: Medicare Coverage Database(107)

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Footnotes

[A] For criteria about prosthetic joint infection, see Septic Arthritis ISC or Septic Arthritis, Pediatric ISC guideline. [A in Context Link 1, 2]

[B] The vast majority of patients with osteoporotic vertebral compression fractures can be treated as outpatients.(9) [B in Context Link 1, 2]

[C] An expert consensus guideline recommends aggressive IV fluid resuscitation targeting urine output goals (approximately 2 to 3 mL/kg/hr) until creatinine kinase is trending downward.(53) [C in Context Link 1]

[D] See Intensive, Intermediate, and Telemetry Care Guidelines ISC. [D in Context Link 1]

[E] See Clinical Indications for Admission to Inpatient Care in this guideline. [E in Context Link 1]

Definitions

Activity level acceptable

- Activity level acceptable, as indicated by **1 or more** of the following:
  - Patient ambulatory and can perform ADL as appropriate for age and development
  - Activity at baseline
  - Activity level acceptable for next level of care

Acute kidney injury (stage 2)

- Acute kidney injury (stage 2) with significant clinical findings, as indicated by **ALL** of the following(1)(2)(3):
  - Acute[A] kidney injury (stage 2), as indicated by **1 or more** of the following[B]:
    - Acute[A] rise in serum creatinine between 2 and 2.9 times its baseline value[C] (increase of 3 times baseline would qualify as stage 3 acute kidney injury)
    - Decreased urine output,[D] as indicated by **ALL** of the following:
      - Assessment of urine output appropriate (eg, adequate volume status, no urinary obstruction)
      - Urine output less than 0.5 mL/kg/hr for 12 hours
  - Significant clinical findings, as indicated by **1 or more** of the following[B]:
    - Hemodynamic instability
    - Worsening clinical status despite observation care (eg, rising creatinine or urine output remains less than 0.5 mL/kg/hr)
    - Altered mental status
    - Cardiac arrhythmias of immediate concern
    - Severe hypertension (SBP greater than 180 mm Hg or DBP greater than 120 mm Hg in adults or greater than the 95th percentile for age, gender, and height plus 30 mm Hg in pediatric patients)(4)(5)
    - Significant respiratory findings (eg, pulmonary edema) that are severe (eg, Hypoxemia) or persist despite observation care
    - Clinically significant electrolyte abnormality that is severe (eg, hyperkalemia with severe ECG findings)[E] or persists despite observation care
    - Clinically significant metabolic abnormality (eg, metabolic acidosis) that is severe or persists despite observation care

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Footnotes

A. A specialty society practice guideline defines acute kidney injury as a change in renal function that is known or presumed to have occurred over the previous 7 days.(1)

B. In determining the stage of acute kidney injury (eg, stage 2 vs stage 3), patients should be staged according to the criteria that give them the highest stage.(1)

C. If the baseline serum creatinine is not known, absent known or suspected chronic kidney disease, a baseline serum creatinine can be approximated by assuming an estimated GFR of 75 mL/min/1.73m^2 (1.25 mL/sec/1.73m^2).(1) eGFR - Adult Calculator eGFR - Pediatric Calculator

D. The use of urine output as an indicator of acute kidney injury is important, as change in urine output can occur before a noticeable rise in creatinine.(1)(3) It is also suggested that urine output can identify patients with acute kidney injury that may otherwise be missed.(1)(3) However, urine output as a metric is only valid under the appropriate conditions. For example, the patient must not be hypovolemic, there must not be urinary obstruction, and the collection and measurement of urinary output must be complete and accurate.(1)(3) Use of urinary output to define acute kidney injury can be inaccurate in obese patients due to the nonlinear relationship between body weight and urine output. For example, in a 100-kg (220-lb) patient, urine output of 45 mL/hr over 12 hours (adequate output) would qualify as stage 2 acute kidney injury.(1)(3)

E. ECG findings include peaked T-waves, PR interval greater than 0.20 seconds, QRS interval greater than 0.12 seconds, and arrhythmia.(6)(7)

Acute renal failure (stage 3 acute kidney injury)

- Acute[A] kidney injury (stage 3),[B] as indicated by **1 or more** of the following[C](1)(2)(3):
  - Acute[A] rise in serum creatinine to 3 times its baseline value[D] or higher
  - Acute[A] rise in serum creatinine to at least 1.5 times its baseline value[D] (increase of 50%) and serum creatinine is greater than 4 mg/dL (354 micromoles/L)
  - In child younger than 18 years, estimated GFR less than 35 mL/min/1.73m^2 (0.58 mL/sec/1.73m^2) eGFR - Pediatric Calculator and **1 or more** of the following:
    - Acute[A] rise in serum creatinine to at least 1.5 times its baseline value[D] (increase of 50%)
    - Within past 48 hours, rise in serum creatinine greater than 0.3 mg/dL (26.5 micromoles/L)
  - Decreased urine output,[E] as indicated by **ALL** of the following:
    - Assessment of urine output appropriate (eg, adequate volume status, no urinary obstruction)
    - Oligoanuria, as indicated by **1 or more** of the following:
      - Urine output less than 0.3 mL/kg/hr for 24 hours
      - Anuria (urine output less than 0.1 mL/kg/hr) for 12 hours
  - Initiation of renal replacement therapy required(4)

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Footnotes

A. A specialty society practice guideline defines acute kidney injury as a change in renal function that is known or presumed to have occurred over the previous 7 days.(1)

B. For purposes of these criteria, the term acute renal failure can be viewed as stage 3 acute kidney injury in the KDIGO classification system.(1) Of note, in the ICD-10 diagnostic coding system (main coding scheme used in labeling diagnoses), the relevant codes covering the clinical entity of significant acute kidney injury use the term acute kidney failure (eg, code N17.9).
C. In determining the stage of acute kidney injury (eg, stage 2 vs stage 3), patients should be staged according to the criteria that give them the highest stage.(1)
D. If the baseline serum creatinine is not known, absent known or suspected chronic kidney disease, a baseline serum creatinine can be approximated by assuming an estimated GFR of 75 mL/min/1.73m^2 (1.25 mL/sec/1.73m^2).(1) eGFR - Adult Calculator eGFR - Pediatric Calculator
E. The use of urine output as an indicator of acute kidney injury is important, as change in urine output can occur before a noticeable rise in creatinine.(1)(3) It is also suggested that urine output can identify patients with acute kidney injury that may otherwise be missed.(1)(3) However, urine output as a metric is only valid under the appropriate conditions. For example, the patient must not be hypovolemic, there must not be urinary obstruction, and the collection and measurement of urinary output must be complete and accurate.(1)(3) Use of urinary output to define acute kidney injury can be inaccurate in obese patients due to the nonlinear relationship between body weight and urine output. For example, in a 100-kg (220-lb) patient, urine output of 45 mL/hr over 12 hours (adequate output) would qualify as stage 2 acute kidney injury.(1)(3)

Altered mental status

- Altered mental status (ie, different from baseline), as indicated by **1 or more** of the following(1)(2)(3)(4):
  - Confusional state (eg, disorientation, difficulty following commands, deficit in attention)
  - Lethargy (eg, awake or arousable, but with drowsiness; reduced awareness of self and environment)
  - Obtundation (ie, arousable only with strong stimuli, lessened interest in environment, slowed responses to stimulation)
  - Stupor (ie, may be arousable but patient does not return to normal baseline level of awareness)
  - Coma (ie, not arousable)

References

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Altered mental status that is severe or persistent

- Altered mental status (ie, different from baseline) that is severe or persistent, as indicated by **1 or more** of the following(1)(2)(3)(4):
  - Confusional state (eg, disorientation, difficulty following commands, deficit in attention) that persists despite appropriate treatment (eg, of underlying cause, despite observation care)
  - Lethargy (eg, awake or arousable, but with drowsiness; reduced awareness of self and environment) that persists despite appropriate treatment (eg, of underlying cause, despite observation care)
  - Obtundation (ie, arousable only with strong stimuli, lessened interest in environment, slowed responses to stimulation)
  - Stupor (ie, may be arousable but patient does not return to normal baseline level of awareness)
  - Coma (ie, not arousable)

References

1. Maher PJ. Confusion. In: Walls RM, editor. Rosen's Emergency Medicine: Concepts and Clinical Practice. 10th ed. Elsevier; 2023:126-131.e1.
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Bacteremia

- Bacteremia refers to blood culture isolation of a bacterial species that is likely to be pathologic and not a contaminant.(1)(2)

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Cardiac arrhythmias of immediate concern

- Cardiac arrhythmias or findings of immediate concern, as indicated by **1 or more** of the following(1)(2)(3):
  - Heart rhythms that are inherently dangerous or unstable, as indicated by **1 or more** of the following(4)(5)(6):
    - Resuscitated ventricular fibrillation or cardiac arrest
    - Ventricular escape rhythm
    - Sustained ventricular tachycardia (30 seconds or more of ventricular rhythm at greater than 100 beats per minute)
    - Nonsustained ventricular tachycardia and **1 or more** of the following:
      - Suspected cardiac ischemia as cause or consequence of ventricular tachycardia
      - Acute myocarditis
  - Unstable cardiac conduction defects, as indicated by **1 or more** of the following(7)(8):
    - Type II second-degree atrioventricular block
    - Third-degree atrioventricular block
    - New-onset left bundle branch block with suspected myocardial ischemia(9)
  - Any heart rhythm and **1 or more** of the following(5)(8)(10)(11)(12)(13):
    - Continuous long-term ECG monitoring needed (eg, initiation of drug requiring monitoring beyond observation care)
    - Patient has automatic implantable cardioverter-defibrillator that is repeatedly firing, malfunctioning, or in need of immediate adjustment of settings beyond scope of observation care.
  - Heart rhythms of concern due to **1 or more** of the following(8):
    - Hypotension
    - Respiratory distress
    - Association with other significant symptoms (eg, syncope)(10)(11)

References

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Fracture or injury absent or status acceptable

- Fracture or injury absent or status acceptable, as indicated by **1 or more** of the following:
  - No injuries
  - Injury stable, as indicated by **ALL** of the following(1):
    - Fractures, joints, and injuries stabilized as needed (eg, cast, orthoses)
    - Neurologic deficit absent, at baseline, stable, or improving
    - Treatment at next level of care appropriate

References

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General Discharge Criteria met

- General Discharge Criteria met or Pediatric General Discharge Criteria met (if either is relevant or necessary for patient's condition)

Hemodynamic instability

- Hemodynamic instability, as indicated by **1 or more** of the following:
  - Vital sign abnormality not corrected by appropriate treatment, as indicated by **1 or more** of the following[A]:
    - Tachycardia that persists despite appropriate treatment (eg, treatment of underlying cause, despite observation care)[A]
    - Hypotension that persists despite appropriate treatment (eg, treatment of underlying cause, despite observation care)[A]
    - Orthostatic hypotension that persists despite appropriate treatment (eg, treatment of underlying cause, despite observation care)[A]
  - Severe hypotension in adult patient, as indicated by **1 or more** of the following:
    - Systolic blood pressure less than 80 mm Hg(1)[A]
    - Shock index greater than 1.0 (shock index is the heart rate divided by systolic blood pressure)[A](2)(3)(4)
    - Mean arterial pressure[B] less than 65 mm Hg MAP Calculator[A](1)(6)
    - IV inotropic or vasopressor medication required to maintain adequate blood pressure or perfusion(3)(6)
    - Hypoperfusion due to hypotension, as indicated by **ALL** of the following:
      - Hypotension
      - Evidence of hypoperfusion, as indicated by **1 or more** of the following:
        - Lactate of 2.0 mmol/L (18 mg/dL) or more secondary to hypotension (ie, hypoperfusion)[C](3)(6)(8)
        - Metabolic acidosis (arterial or venous[D] pH less than 7.35) not otherwise explained(3)(6)(8)
        - Significant end organ dysfunction due to hypotension (eg, Altered mental status, myocardial ischemia, 2-fold or higher acute increase in serum creatinine)(3)(6)
  - Severe hypotension in pediatric patient, as indicated by **1 or more** of the following:
    - Systolic blood pressure less than 80 mm Hg in child 6 to 17 years of age[A](14)
    - Systolic blood pressure less than 75 mm Hg in child 6 months to 5 years of age[A](14)
    - Shock index greater than 0.9 in child 13 to 17 years of age (shock index is the heart rate divided by systolic blood pressure)[A](2)(15)
    - Shock index greater than 1.0 in child 7 to 12 years of age (shock index is the heart rate divided by systolic blood pressure)[A](2)(15)
    - Shock index greater than 1.2 in child 4 to 6 years of age (shock index is the heart rate divided by systolic blood pressure)[A](2)(15)
    - IV inotropic or vasopressor medication required to maintain adequate blood pressure or perfusion(5)(6)
    - Hypoperfusion due to hypotension, as indicated by **ALL** of the following:
      - Hypotension
      - Evidence of hypoperfusion, as indicated by **1 or more** of the following:
        - Lactate of 2.0 mmol/L (18 mg/dL) or more secondary to hypotension (ie, hypoperfusion)[C](6)(8)
        - Metabolic acidosis (arterial or venous pH less than 7.35) not otherwise explained[D](5)(6)(14)
        - Significant end organ dysfunction due to hypotension (eg, Altered mental status, myocardial ischemia, 2-fold or higher acute increase in serum creatinine)(5)(6)(14)

References

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Footnotes

A. Criteria based upon clinician-acquired numeric values (eg, vital signs, oxygen saturation) should be used if they are accurate reflections of the patient's condition. Transitory findings (eg, abnormal only upon initial emergency department intake or only one time out of multiple readings) that rapidly improve with no or minimal treatment usually do not reflect disease severity or risk for deterioration. This does not imply that an initial or one-time reading cannot ever be applicable. The goal is to separate erroneous or incidental findings from those that truly represent the patient's clinical picture.
B. The mean arterial pressure (MAP) takes into account both SBP and DBP readings.(3)(5)
C. There are numerous causes of an elevated lactate level. The most common are cardiogenic or hypovolemic shock, severe heart failure, severe trauma, or sepsis. However, there are also other etiologies to consider such as vigorous exercise, seizures, liver disease, or medication use (eg, metformin, beta2-agonists); therefore, interpretation of elevated lactate levels requires consideration of the clinical context (eg, well-appearing post exercise vs hypotensive). The severity and persistence of the elevation can sometimes be helpful in this differentiation. In most instances of lactic acidosis, blood pH is less than 7.35, with a serum bicarbonate level of 20 mEq/L (mmol/L) or lower. However, a coexisting respiratory or metabolic alkalosis can mask these findings.(7)(8)
D. Analyses have concluded that venous and arterial pH measurements are highly correlated, with small differences between them that are usually not clinically significant.(9)(10)(11)(12)(13) If a mixed acid-base disorder is suspected, an arterial blood gas is indicated.(10)

Hemodynamic stability

- Hemodynamic stability, as indicated by **1 or more** of the following:
  - Hemodynamic abnormalities at baseline or acceptable for next level of care
  - Patient hemodynamically stable, as indicated by **ALL** of the following(1)(2):
    - Tachycardia absent
    - Hypotension absent

- No evidence of inadequate perfusion (eg, no myocardial ischemia)
- No other hemodynamic abnormalities (eg, no Orthostatic hypotension)

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Hypotension

- Hypotension, as indicated by **1 or more** of the following:
  - Hypotension in adult patient, as indicated by **1 or more** of the following:
    - Systolic blood pressure less than 90 mm Hg[A][B](1)
    - Mean arterial pressure[C] less than 70 mm Hg[A][B] MAP Calculator(1)(2)
    - Decrease in baseline systolic blood pressure of 30 mm Hg or more, with significant signs or symptoms due to lower blood pressure (eg, near syncope, syncope, chest pain)[A][B](1)
  - Hypotension in pediatric patient, as indicated by **1 or more** of the following:
    - Systolic blood pressure less than 110 mm Hg in child 13 to 17 years of age[A][D](3)
    - Systolic blood pressure less than 100 mm Hg in child 6 to 12 years of age[A][D](3)
    - Systolic blood pressure less than 95 mm Hg in child 3 to 5 years of age[A][D](3)
    - Systolic blood pressure less than 90 mm Hg in child 1 or 2 years of age[A][D](3)
    - Systolic blood pressure less than 80 mm Hg in infant 6 to 11 months of age[A][D](3)
    - Systolic blood pressure less than 70 mm Hg in infant 3 to 5 months of age[A][D](3)
    - Systolic blood pressure less than 65 mm Hg in infant 1 or 2 months of age[A][D](3)

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1. Schriger DL. Approach to the patient with abnormal vital signs. In: Goldman L, Cooney KA, editors. Goldman-Cecil Medicine. 27th ed. Elsevier; 2024:32-35.
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3. Anderson CC, Kapoor S, Mark TE. Pediatric parameters and equipment. In: Anderson CC, Kapoor S, Mark TE, editors. The Harriet Lane Handbook: A Manual for Pediatric House Officers. 23rd ed. Elsevier; 2024:i-iii.

Footnotes

A. Criteria based upon clinician-acquired numeric values (eg, vital signs, oxygen saturation) should be used if they are accurate reflections of the patient's condition. Transitory findings (eg, abnormal only upon initial emergency department intake or only one time out of multiple readings) that rapidly improve with no or minimal treatment usually do not reflect disease severity or risk for deterioration. This does not imply that an initial or one-time reading cannot ever be applicable. The goal is to separate erroneous or incidental findings from those that truly represent the patient's clinical picture.

B. Interpretation of blood pressure requires clinical judgment and consideration of several patient-specific factors, such as the patient's baseline blood pressure, medications, and clinical impact. For example, an elderly patient with heart failure may be prescribed medication with the intentional goal of a reduced pressure. If the patient's baseline SBP is 92 mm Hg to 96 mm Hg, absent signs or symptoms of hypotension, an emergency department SBP of 86 mm Hg should not automatically be categorized as hypotensive. This would hold for mean arterial pressure (MAP) as well. The numeric values included in this definition are

provided to allow for consistency in terms of a technical definition of the term hypotension. Whether a blood pressure below the technical threshold is clinically meaningful is a matter of persistence, context, and clinical judgment.

C. The mean arterial pressure (MAP) takes into account both SBP and DBP readings.

D. Interpretation of blood pressure requires clinical judgment and consideration of several patient-specific factors, such as the patient's baseline blood pressure, medications, and clinical impact. The numeric values included in this definition are provided to allow for consistency in terms of a technical definition of the term hypotension. Whether a blood pressure below the technical threshold is clinically meaningful is a matter of persistence, context, and clinical judgment.

Hypotension absent

- Hypotension absent,[A] as indicated by **1 or more** of the following:
  - Hypotension absent in adult patient, as indicated by **1 or more** of the following:
    - Systolic blood pressure greater than or equal to 90 mm Hg[A](1)
    - Mean arterial pressure[B] greater than or equal to 70 mm Hg MAP Calculator[A](1)(2)
    - Blood pressure at patient's baseline (eg, healthy adult with low systolic blood pressure), at intentional therapeutic goal (eg, patient with heart failure), or acceptable for next level of care (eg, blood pressure stable and no significant signs or symptoms due to low blood pressure)
  - Hypotension absent in pediatric patient, as indicated by **1 or more** of the following:
    - Systolic blood pressure greater than or equal to 110 mm Hg in child 13 to 17 years of age[A](3)
    - Systolic blood pressure greater than or equal to 100 mm Hg in child 6 to 12 years of age[A](3)
    - Systolic blood pressure greater than or equal to 95 mm Hg in child 3 to 5 years of age[A](3)
    - Systolic blood pressure greater than or equal to 90 mm Hg in child 1 or 2 years of age[A](3)
    - Systolic blood pressure greater than or equal to 80 mm Hg in infant 6 to 11 months of age[A](3)
    - Systolic blood pressure greater than or equal to 70 mm Hg in infant 3 to 5 months of age[A](3)
    - Systolic blood pressure greater than or equal to 65 mm Hg in infant 1 or 2 months of age[A](3)
    - Blood pressure at patient's baseline (eg, healthy child with low systolic blood pressure), at intentional therapeutic goal, or acceptable for next level of care (eg, blood pressure stable and no significant signs or symptoms due to low blood pressure)

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1. Schriger DL. Approach to the patient with abnormal vital signs. In: Goldman L, Cooney KA, editors. Goldman-Cecil Medicine. 27th ed. Elsevier; 2024:32-35.
2. Puskarich MA, Jones AE. Shock. In: Walls RM, editor. Rosen's Emergency Medicine: Concepts and Clinical Practice. 10th ed. Elsevier; 2023:34-41.e1.
3. Anderson CC, Kapoor S, Mark TE. Pediatric parameters and equipment. In: Anderson CC, Kapoor S, Mark TE, editors. The Harriet Lane Handbook: A Manual for Pediatric House Officers. 23rd ed. Elsevier; 2024:i-iii.

Footnotes

A. Criteria based upon clinician-acquired numeric values (eg, vital signs, oxygen saturation) should be used if they are accurate reflections of the patient's condition. Transitory findings (eg, abnormal only upon initial emergency department intake or only one time out of multiple readings) that rapidly improve with no or minimal treatment usually do not reflect disease severity or risk for deterioration. This does not imply that an initial or one-time reading cannot ever be applicable. The goal is to separate erroneous or incidental findings from those that truly represent the patient's clinical picture.

B. The mean arterial pressure (MAP) takes into account both SBP and DBP readings.

Hypoxemia

- Hypoxemia, as indicated by **1 or more** of the following(1):
  - Patient without baseline need for supplemental oxygen with oxygen saturation (SpO_2) of less than 90% or arterial blood gas partial pressure of oxygen (PaO_2) of less than 60 mm Hg (8.0 kPa) on room air[A][B]
  - Patient without baseline need for supplemental oxygen who now requires supplemental oxygen to keep SpO_2 greater than 89% or PaO_2 greater than 59 mm Hg (7.9 kPa)[A]
  - Patient with baseline need for supplemental oxygen who now requires increased supplemental oxygen to maintain oxygenation at baseline or acceptable level

References

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Footnotes

A. Pulse oximetry (SpO_2) may underestimate arterial saturation (SaO_2), especially in people with dark skin pigmentation, thick skin, cold body temperature, or who are wearing colored nail polish, and thus may not accurately detect hypoxemia.(2) Where appropriate, pulse oximetry should be measured after warming fingers or removing nail polish. Pulse oximetry results should be assessed within the context of the patient's clinical presentation, and performance of an arterial blood gas considered for a more accurate assessment of oxygenation if indicated.(2) Specific target values may require adjustment when care is delivered at high altitude.(3)

B. Criteria based upon clinician-acquired numeric values (eg, vital signs, oxygen saturation) should be used if they are accurate reflections of the patient's condition. Transitory findings (eg, abnormal only upon initial emergency department intake or only one time out of multiple readings) that rapidly improve with no or minimal treatment usually do not reflect disease severity or risk for deterioration. This does not imply that an initial or one-time reading cannot ever be applicable. The goal is to separate erroneous or incidental findings from those that truly represent the patient's clinical picture.

Inpatient anticoagulation needed

- Contraindication to outpatient use of medication with rapid anticoagulation effect (eg, IV unfractionated heparin and warfarin indicated),[A] as indicated by **ALL** of the following(1)(2)(4)(5):
  - Contraindication to use of low-molecular-weight heparin, as indicated by **1 or more** of the following:
    - Current or history of heparin-induced thrombocytopenia
    - Severe thrombocytopenia (eg, platelet count less than 50,000/mm^3 (50 $x10^9$/L))
    - Allergy to heparin, low-molecular-weight heparin, or product components
    - Need for neuraxial anesthesia or spinal puncture anticipated
    - Inability to manage self-injection (eg, by patient, caregiver, or visiting nurse)
  - Contraindication to use of fondaparinux, as indicated by **1 or more** of the following:
    - Severe thrombocytopenia (eg, platelet count less than 50,000/mm^3 (50 $x10^9$/L))
    - Allergy to fondaparinux, related drugs, or product components

- Renal failure (creatinine clearance less than 30 mL/min/1.73m^2 (0.50 mL/sec/1.73m^2) or on dialysis) eGFR - Adult Calculator eGFR - Pediatric Calculator
- Pregnancy(4)
- Severe liver disease (eg, Child-Pugh class C or coagulopathy (eg, elevated INR) due to liver disease)
- Mechanical heart valve
- Need for neuraxial anesthesia or spinal puncture anticipated
- Inability to manage self-injection (eg, by patient, caregiver, or visiting nurse)
- BMI greater than or equal to 50[B]

- Contraindication to use of oral direct thrombin inhibitor (eg, dabigatran) or oral factor Xa inhibitor (eg, apixaban, edoxaban, rivaroxaban), as indicated by **1 or more** of the following[C][D](11):
  - Severe thrombocytopenia (eg, platelet count less than 50,000/mm^3 (50 x10^9/L))
  - Allergy to medication or product components
  - Pregnancy or breast-feeding[D](4)(11)
  - Severe liver disease (eg, Child-Pugh class C or coagulopathy (eg, elevated INR) due to liver disease)(12)
  - Renal failure (creatinine clearance less than 15 mL/min/1.73m^2 (0.25 mL/sec/1.73m^2) or on dialysis)[D](11) eGFR - Adult Calculator eGFR - Pediatric Calculator
  - Mechanical heart valve[D](11)(13)
  - Atrial fibrillation with rheumatic mitral stenosis[D](11)
  - Thrombotic antiphospholipid syndrome[D](11)
  - Left ventricular thrombus[D](11)
  - Catheter-associated deep venous thrombosis[D](11)
  - Cerebral venous sinus thrombosis[D](11)
  - Need for neuraxial anesthesia or spinal puncture anticipated
  - BMI greater than or equal to 50[B]

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Footnotes

A. Patients using low-molecular-weight heparin, fondaparinux, an oral direct thrombin inhibitor, or an oral factor Xa inhibitor achieve full anticoagulation rapidly (eg, a few hours after first dose).(1)(2)(3)
B. The clinical utility of factor Xa inhibitors or direct thrombin inhibitors in patients with a BMI greater than or equal to 50 is unclear, due to a relative paucity of data in these patients.(6)(7)(8) While some do advocate the use of factor Xa inhibitors or direct thrombin inhibitors in this patient group, others suggest that absent clear evidence of efficacy, it is preferable to use heparin (low-molecular-weight or unfractionated) transitioning to warfarin because of the long established ability to carefully adjust dosage based on measurement of anticoagulant effect (eg, via measurement of anti-factor Xa level, prothrombin/INR).(6)(7)(8)
C. With caution and dose adjustment, apixaban can be administered to patients with stage 5 renal failure (creatinine clearance less than 15 mL/min/1.73m^2 (0.25 mL/sec/1.73m^2)) or who are receiving hemodialysis.(5)(9)(10) Rivaroxaban and edoxaban are not recommended for patients with stage 5 or hemodialysis-dependent renal failure.
D. A systematic review of relevant randomized controlled trials concludes that direct oral anticoagulants (ie, oral factor Xa and oral thrombin inhibitors) should not be standard treatment for patients with mechanical heart valves, atrial fibrillation with rheumatic mitral stenosis, or thrombotic antiphospholipid syndrome.(11) For these indications, use of a vitamin K antagonist (eg, warfarin) is preferred.(11) The review further concludes that the efficacy and safety of direct oral anticoagulants is uncertain in patients with left ventricular thrombus, catheter-associated deep venous thrombosis, or cerebral venous sinus thrombosis.(11) Concerning patients with end-stage renal disease, the review states that the choice of an anticoagulant should be individualized due to the lack of definitive data, balancing the pros and cons of a direct oral anticoagulant and vitamin K antagonist-based anticoagulation.(11) Patients who are pregnant or breast-feeding should avoid direct oral anticoagulants pending further study concerning safety.(11)

Intake acceptable

- Intake acceptable, as indicated by **1 or more** of the following(1):
  - Oral hydration, medications, and diet
  - Enteral hydration, medications, and diet
  - Administration routes performable at next level of care

References

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Neurologic status acceptable

- Neurologic status acceptable, as indicated by neurologic function and mental status being **1 or more** of the following(1)(2):
  - Normal
  - Baseline
  - Appropriate for next level of care

References

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No infection, or status acceptable

- No infection, or status acceptable, as indicated by **1 or more** of the following(1)(2)(3)(4)(5):
  - No infection present
  - Infection status acceptable for next level of care, as indicated by **ALL** of the following(6):
    - WBC count normal, stable, or declining with treatment
    - Adequate treatment performable at next level of care
    - Organism and sensitivities identified, or adequate clinical response to empiric therapy
    - Repeat cultures negative or not needed

References

1. Hooper DC, Shenoy ES, Elshaboury RH. Treatment and prophylaxis of bacterial infections. In: Loscalzo J, Fauci A, Kasper D, Hauser S, Longo D, Jameson JL, editors. Harrison's Principles of Internal Medicine. 21st ed. McGraw Hill Education; 2022:1148-1163.
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No inpatient interventions needed

- No inpatient interventions needed; examples include:
  - Vital signs, neurologic signs, or vascular checks more often than feasible at next level of care
  - Bone or joint debridement planned within 24 hours
  - Drain care: drains in place with high-volume output requiring continuing observation and care that cannot be managed at next level of care
  - Cell pheresis or apheresis in unstable patient
  - Coagulopathy treatment with plasma or platelet transfusions

Orthostatic hypotension

- Orthostatic hypotension,[A][B] as indicated by **1 or more** of the following(1)(2)(3):
  - Fall in SBP of 20 mm Hg or more 1 to 3 minutes after patient sits or stands from recumbent position
  - Fall in DBP of 10 mm Hg or more 1 to 3 minutes after patient sits or stands from recumbent position

References

1. Shibao C, Lipsitz LA, Biaggioni I, American Society of Hypertension Writing Group. Evaluation and treatment of orthostatic hypotension. Journal of the American Society of Hypertension 2013 Jul-Aug;7(4):317-324. DOI: 10.1016/j.jash.2013.04.006.
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Footnotes

A. Concomitant measurements of the heart rate are important to measure to help diagnose subtypes of orthostatic hypotension (eg, the lack of a compensatory increase in heart rate is typical of autonomic failure and an exaggerated tachycardia may be reflective of volume depletion). However, the heart rate is not a component of the definition of orthostatic hypotension, which relies upon blood pressure alone.(1)(2)(3)

B. Criteria based upon clinician acquired numeric values (eg, vital signs, oxygen saturation) should be used if they are accurate reflections of the patient's condition. Transitory findings (eg, abnormal only upon initial emergency department intake or only one time out of multiple readings) that rapidly improve with no or minimal treatment usually do not reflect disease severity or risk for deterioration. This does not imply that an initial or one-time reading cannot ever be applicable. The goal is to separate erroneous or incidental findings from those that truly represent the patient's clinical picture.

Pain and nausea absent or adequately managed

- Pain and nausea absent or adequately managed, as indicated by **1 or more** of the following(1)(2)(3)(4)(5):
  - No pain or nausea
  - Minimal discomfort on oral medications
  - Pain and nausea managed on regimen performable at next level of care

References

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Respiratory distress

- Respiratory distress, as indicated by **ALL** of the following(1)(2)(3)(4):
  - Patient with **1 or more** of the following:
    - Dyspnea (difficulty breathing)
    - Tachypnea
    - Abnormal breathing pattern (eg, chest retractions)
    - Other evidence of difficulty breathing
  - Evidence of respiratory compromise, as indicated by **1 or more** of the following:
    - Hypoxemia
    - Altered mental status
    - Other evidence of respiratory compromise (eg, respiratory acidosis)

References

1. Braithwaite SA, Wessel AL. Dyspnea. In: Walls RM, editor. Rosen's Emergency Medicine: Concepts and Clinical Practice. 10th ed. Elsevier; 2023:194-201.e2.
2. Naureckas ET, Solway J. Disturbances of respiratory function. In: Loscalzo J, Fauci A, Kasper D, Hauser S, Longo D, Jameson JL, editors. Harrison's Principles of Internal Medicine. 21st ed. McGraw Hill Education; 2022:2133-2139.
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Respiratory status acceptable

- Respiratory status acceptable, as indicated by **ALL** of the following(1)(2)(3)(4):
  - Patient breathing comfortably (or near baseline) and able to protect airway (eg, able to handle secretions)
  - Tachypnea absent
  - Oxygen saturation greater than 90%, near baseline, or measurement not indicated for condition
  - Supplemental oxygen or respiratory treatments not needed or are performable at next level of care
  - Airflow measurements greater than 60% of predicted, at stable baseline, or measurement not indicated for condition
  - Partial pressure of carbon dioxide and pH normal, at stable baseline, or measurement not indicated for condition

References

1. Braithwaite SA, Wessel AL. Dyspnea. In: Walls RM, editor. Rosen's Emergency Medicine: Concepts and Clinical Practice. 10th ed. Elsevier; 2023:194-201.e2.
2. Naureckas ET, Solway J. Disturbances of respiratory function. In: Loscalzo J, Fauci A, Kasper D, Hauser S, Longo D, Jameson JL, editors. Harrison's Principles of Internal Medicine. 21st ed. McGraw Hill Education; 2022:2133-2139.
3. Matthay MA, Ware LB. Acute respiratory failure. In: Goldman L, Cooney KA, editors. Goldman-Cecil Medicine. 27th ed. Elsevier; 2024:642-652.

4. Rakoczy K. Acute respiratory failure. In: Gershel JC, Rauch DA, editors. Caring for the Hospitalized Child: A Handbook of Inpatient Pediatrics. 3rd ed. Elk Grove Village, IL: American Academy of Pediatrics; 2023:749-754.

Severe electrolyte abnormalities requiring inpatient care

- Severe electrolyte abnormalities requiring inpatient care, as indicated by **ALL** of the following(1)(2)(3):
  - Electrolyte abnormality is not at acceptable patient baseline (eg, treatment effect).
  - Severe abnormality, as indicated by **1 or more** of the following:
    - Sodium[A] less than 130 mEq/L (mmol/L) not corrected to near normal or near chronic baseline despite observation care treatment(4)(5)
    - Sodium[A] less than 135 mEq/L (mmol/L) with new (or presumed new) severe finding requiring inpatient management (eg, Altered mental status, seizures)(4)(5)
    - Sodium greater than 150 mEq/L (mmol/L) not corrected to near normal or near chronic baseline despite observation care treatment(4)
    - Sodium greater than 145 mEq/L (mmol/L) with new (or presumed new) severe finding requiring inpatient management (eg, Altered mental status, seizures)(4)
    - Potassium less than 2.5 mEq/L (mmol/L) not corrected to near normal or near chronic baseline despite observation care treatment(6)
    - Potassium less than 3 mEq/L (mmol/L) with new (or presumed new) severe finding requiring inpatient management (eg, ECG findings,[B] paresis, paralysis)(6)(7)
    - Potassium greater than 6.5 mEq/L (mmol/L) not corrected to near normal or near chronic baseline despite observation care treatment(6)
    - Potassium greater than 5 mEq/L (mmol/L) with new (or presumed new) severe finding requiring inpatient management (eg, ECG findings,[C] paresis, paralysis)(6)(7)(8)
    - Calcium[D] less than 7 mg/dL (1.75 mmol/L) or ionized calcium less than 3.2 mg/dL (0.8 mmol/L) not corrected to near normal or near chronic baseline despite observation care treatment(9)(11)
    - Calcium[D] less than 8.6 mg/dL (2.15 mmol/L) or ionized calcium less than 4.65 mg/dL (1.16 mmol/L) with new (or presumed new) severe finding requiring inpatient management (eg, Altered mental status, seizures, arrhythmia, cardiac conduction disturbance)(9)(11)
    - Calcium[D] greater than 14 mg/dL (3.5 mmol/L) or ionized calcium greater than 10.0 mg/dL (2.50 mmol/L) not corrected to near normal or near chronic baseline despite observation care treatment(10)(11)
    - Calcium[D] greater than 12 mg/dL (3 mmol/L) or ionized calcium greater than 8.0 mg/dL (2.0 mmol/L) with new (or presumed new) severe finding requiring inpatient management (eg, Altered mental status, arrhythmia, cardiac conduction disturbance)(10)(11)
    - Phosphorus less than 1 mg/dL (0.32 mmol/L) not corrected to near normal or near chronic baseline despite observation care treatment(12)
    - Phosphorus less than 1.5 mg/dL (0.48 mmol/L) with new (or presumed new) severe finding requiring inpatient management (eg, Altered mental status, seizures)(12)
    - Phosphorus greater than 10 mg/dL (3.2 mmol/L) not corrected to near normal or near chronic baseline despite observation care treatment(12)
    - Phosphorus greater than 4.5 mg/dL (1.45 mmol/L) with new (or presumed new) severe finding requiring inpatient management (eg, crush injury, Altered mental status, seizures, arrhythmia, cardiac conduction disturbance)(12)
    - Magnesium less than 1 mg/dL (0.41 mmol/L) not corrected to near normal or near chronic baseline despite observation care treatment(12)
    - Magnesium less than 1.5 mg/dL (0.62 mmol/L) with new (or presumed new) severe finding requiring inpatient management (eg, Altered mental status, seizures, arrhythmia, cardiac conduction disturbance)(12)
    - Magnesium greater than 4.9 mg/dL (2 mmol/L) not corrected to near normal or near chronic baseline despite observation care treatment(12)
    - Magnesium greater than 3.0 mg/dL (1.23 mmol/L) with new (or presumed new) severe finding requiring inpatient management (eg, Altered mental status, arrhythmia, cardiac conduction disturbance)(12)
    - Uric acid greater than 20 mg/dL (1.19 mmol/L) not corrected to near normal or near chronic baseline despite observation care treatment(13)

- Uric acid greater than 8 mg/dL (0.48 mmol/L) with new (or presumed new) severe finding requiring inpatient management (eg, arrhythmia, cardiac conduction disturbance, seizure)(13)

References

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Footnotes

A. In patients with hyperglycemia, a corrected serum sodium should inform decision making.(4)
B. ECG manifestations of hypokalemia include ST-segment depression, flattened T-waves, and increased U-wave prominence.(7)
C. ECG changes associated with hyperkalemia include peaked T-waves, prolonged PR interval, loss of P-waves, prolonged QRS interval, or sinus bradycardia. Other manifestations include second-degree or third-degree atrioventricular block or a junctional escape rhythm. The ultimate result of hyperkalemia can be ventricular fibrillation, pulseless electrical activity, or asystole. ECG changes are not a sensitive indicator of severe hyperkalemia; patients with severe hyperkalemia may have minimal or nondiagnostic abnormalities. While a normal ECG does not exclude hyperkalemia, it does confer a much lower risk of dangerous arrhythmia. Hyperkalemic patients with isolated T-wave abnormalities are at low risk of a serious adverse event overall, while patients with conduction abnormalities and other more severe ECG findings are at higher risk.(6)(7)(8)
D. An ionized calcium level may be more accurate than a total serum calcium level, especially in the setting of acidosis, renal failure, multiple transfusions, hypoalbuminemia, or the presence of a paraprotein.(9)(10)

Severe pain requiring acute inpatient management

- Severe pain requiring inpatient management, as indicated by **1 or more** of the following(1)(2)(3)(4):

- Inpatient parenteral analgesic agent treatment required,[A] as indicated by **ALL** of the following:
  - Pain insufficiently responsive to nonpharmacologic and oral pharmacologic analgesia (eg, NSAID, oral opioid)
  - Need for parenteral treatment persists despite observation care (eg, adjustments in dosage, frequency, medication, route).
- Pain control regimen for next level of care not established, as indicated by **ALL** of the following:
  - Regimen used to achieve sufficient pain control is not readily performable at next level of care.
  - Unable to convert patient to regimen performable at next level of care despite observation care (eg, adjustments in dosage, frequency, medication, route)
- Suspected new or deteriorating disease process as etiology (eg, new site of metastatic disease) requiring inpatient evaluation and treatment (eg, urgent radiation therapy)(7)
- Palliative procedure planned that necessitates inpatient care for assessment and monitoring needs (eg, celiac block, stent to relieve obstruction)

References

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Footnotes

A. Many validated instruments are available to quantify pain.(4)(5) A visual analog or numerical rating scale graded from 0 to 10 is often used; moderate pain correlates with a score of 4 to 6 and severe pain is 7 to 10.(4) Different scales may be more appropriate for different disease processes or patient populations.(5)(6)

Social Determinants of Health Assessment

- Risk of poor health outcomes may be increased by the presence of **1 or more** of the following social determinants of health(1)(2)(3):
  - Housing insecurity, as indicated by **1 or more** of the following:
    - Individual or caregiver's current living situation is **1 or more** of the following(4):
      - Does not have own housing (eg, staying in a hotel, shelter, or with others)
      - Has own housing (eg, house, apartment), but at risk of losing it in the future (ie, behind on rent or mortgage)
      - Has own housing (eg, house, apartment), but has lived in 3 or more places in past year
    - Current housing has **1 or more** of the following:
      - Electrical appliances (eg, stove, refrigerator) not working or unavailable

        - Insufficient heating or cooling
        - Insufficient ventilation
        - Lead paint or pipes
        - Mold
        - Pests (eg, bugs) or rodents
        - Smoke detectors not working or unavailable
    - Food insecurity, as indicated by **1 or more** of the following(5):
        - In the past year, individual or caregiver ran out of food and did not have money to buy more food.
        - In the past year, individual or caregiver worried that they would run out of food before they received money to buy more food.
    - Insufficient transportation, as indicated by **1 or more** of the following(6):
        - In the past year, individual or caregiver missed medical appointments or could not get medications due to lack of transportation.
        - In the past year, individual or caregiver missed nonmedical activities, work, or could not get things needed for daily living due to lack of transportation.
    - Insufficient utilities, as indicated by **1 or more** of the following(7):
        - Utilities (eg, electricity, water, gas, or oil) are currently shut off or unavailable.
        - In the past year, electric, water, gas, or oil company threatened to shut off services.
    - Personal safety risk, as indicated by **2 or more** of the following(5):
        - Individual is sometimes or frequently physically hurt by another person (including family member).
        - Individual is sometimes or frequently insulted or talked down to by another person (including family member).
        - Individual is sometimes or frequently threatened with physical harm by another person (including family member).
        - Individual is sometimes or frequently screamed or cursed at by another person (including family member).
    - Insufficient dependent care, as indicated by **1 or more** of the following:
        - In the past year, individual or caregiver was unable to work due to lack of dependent care.
        - In the past year, individual or caregiver was unable to work more (additional) hours due to lack of dependent care.
        - In the past year, individual or caregiver missed medical appointments or could not get medications due to lack of dependent care.
        - In the past year, individual or caregiver missed nonmedical activities (eg, school, church, social activity) due to lack of dependent care.
    - Depression risk, as indicated by **ALL** of the following(8):
        - In the past 2 weeks, individual had little interest or pleasure in normal activities on at least several days.
        - In the past 2 weeks, individual felt down, depressed, or hopeless on at least several days.

References

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Tachycardia

- Tachycardia,[A][B] as indicated by **1 or more** of the following:
  - Heart rate greater than 100 beats per minute in adult[A][B](1)
  - Heart rate greater than 85 beats per minute in child 13 to 17 years of age[A][C](2)
  - Heart rate greater than 95 beats per minute in child 6 to 12 years of age[A][C](2)
  - Heart rate greater than 110 beats per minute in child 1 to 5 years of age[A][C](2)
  - Heart rate greater than 120 beats per minute in infant 3 to 11 months of age[A][C](2)
  - Heart rate greater than 150 beats per minute in infant 1 or 2 months of age[A][C](2)

References

1. Schriger DL. Approach to the patient with abnormal vital signs. In: Goldman L, Cooney KA, editors. Goldman-Cecil Medicine. 27th ed. Elsevier; 2024:32-35.
2. Anderson CC, Kapoor S, Mark TE. Pediatric parameters and equipment. In: Anderson CC, Kapoor S, Mark TE, editors. The Harriet Lane Handbook: A Manual for Pediatric House Officers. 23rd ed. Elsevier; 2024:i-iii.

Footnotes

A. Criteria based upon clinician acquired numeric values (eg, vital signs, oxygen saturation) should be used if they are accurate reflections of the patient's condition. Transitory findings (eg, abnormal only upon initial emergency department intake or only one time out of multiple readings) that rapidly improve with no or minimal treatment usually do not reflect disease severity or risk for deterioration. This does not imply that an initial or one-time reading cannot ever be applicable. The goal is to separate erroneous or incidental findings from those that truly represent the patient's clinical picture.

B. Interpretation of heart rate requires clinical judgment and consideration of several patient-specific factors, such as the patient's baseline heart rate, medications, and clinical impact. For example, an elderly patient on a beta-blocker medication with a baseline resting heart rate of 60 beats per minute may be clinically tachycardic at a heart rate of 94 beats per minute. Likewise, a patient who is upset, in pain, or nervous in the emergency department with a heart rate of 106 beats per minute may meet the technical definition of tachycardia, but this tachycardia (absent associated findings such as chest pain or hypotension) may not be clinically important. The numeric values included in this definition are provided to allow for consistency in terms of a technical definition of the term tachycardia. Whether a heart rate above or below the technical threshold is clinically meaningful is a matter of persistence, context, and clinical judgment.

C. Interpretation of heart rate requires clinical judgment and consideration of several patient-specific factors, such as the patient's baseline heart rate, medications, and clinical impact. A patient who is upset, in pain, or nervous in the emergency department with an elevated heart rate may meet the technical definition of tachycardia, but this tachycardia (absent associated findings such as hypotension) may not be clinically important. The numeric values included in this definition are provided to allow for consistency in terms of a technical definition of the term tachycardia. Whether a heart rate above or below the technical threshold is clinically meaningful is a matter of persistence, context, and clinical judgment.

Tachycardia absent

- Tachycardia[A][B] absent, as indicated by **1 or more** of the following:
  - Heart rate less than or equal to 100 beats per minute in adult[A][B](1)
  - Heart rate less than or equal to 85 beats per minute in child 13 to 17 years of age[A][B](2)

- Heart rate less than or equal to 95 beats per minute in child 6 to 12 years of age[A][B](2)
- Heart rate less than or equal to 110 beats per minute in child 1 to 5 years of age[A][B](2)
- Heart rate less than or equal to 120 beats per minute in infant 3 to 11 months of age[A][B](2)
- Heart rate less than or equal to 150 beats per minute in infant 1 or 2 months of age[A][B](2)

References

1. Schriger DL. Approach to the patient with abnormal vital signs. In: Goldman L, Cooney KA, editors. Goldman-Cecil Medicine. 27th ed. Elsevier; 2024:32-35.
2. Anderson CC, Kapoor S, Mark TE. Pediatric parameters and equipment. In: Anderson CC, Kapoor S, Mark TE, editors. The Harriet Lane Handbook: A Manual for Pediatric House Officers. 23rd ed. Elsevier; 2024:i-iii.

Footnotes

A. Criteria based upon clinician acquired numeric values (eg, vital signs, oxygen saturation) should be used if they are accurate reflections of the patient's condition. Transitory findings (eg, abnormal only upon initial emergency department intake or only one time out of multiple readings) that rapidly improve with no or minimal treatment usually do not reflect disease severity or risk for deterioration. This does not imply that an initial or one-time reading cannot ever be applicable. The goal is to separate erroneous or incidental findings from those that truly represent the patient's clinical picture.

B. Interpretation of heart rate requires clinical judgment and consideration of several patient-specific factors, such as the patient's baseline heart rate, medications, and clinical impact. For example, an elderly patient on a beta-blocker medication with a baseline resting heart rate of 60 beats per minute may be clinically tachycardic at a heart rate of 94 beats per minute. Likewise, a patient who is upset, in pain, or nervous in the emergency department with a heart rate of 106 beats per minute may meet the technical definition of tachycardia, but this tachycardia (absent associated findings such as chest pain or hypotension) may not be clinically important. The numeric values included in this definition are provided to allow for consistency in terms of a technical definition of the term tachycardia. Whether a heart rate above or below the technical threshold is clinically meaningful is a matter of persistence, context, and clinical judgment.

Tachypnea

- Tachypnea,[A][B] as indicated by **1 or more** of the following:
  - Respiratory rate greater than 20 breaths per minute in adult[A][B](1)
  - Respiratory rate greater than 18 breaths per minute in child 13 to 17 years of age[A][B](2)
  - Respiratory rate greater than 22 breaths per minute in child 6 to 12 years of age[A][B](2)
  - Respiratory rate greater than 25 breaths per minute in child 3 to 5 years of age[A][B](2)
  - Respiratory rate greater than 30 breaths per minute in child 1 or 2 years of age[A][B](2)
  - Respiratory rate greater than 40 breaths per minute in infant 6 to 11 months of age[A][B](2)
  - Respiratory rate greater than 45 breaths per minute in infant 3 to 5 months of age[A][B](2)
  - Respiratory rate greater than 55 breaths per minute in infant 1 or 2 months of age[A][B](2)

References

1. Schriger DL. Approach to the patient with abnormal vital signs. In: Goldman L, Cooney KA, editors. Goldman-Cecil Medicine. 27th ed. Elsevier; 2024:32-35.
2. Anderson CC, Kapoor S, Mark TE. Pediatric parameters and equipment. In: Anderson CC, Kapoor S, Mark TE, editors. The Harriet Lane Handbook: A Manual for Pediatric House Officers. 23rd ed. Elsevier; 2024:i-iii.

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B. Interpretation of respiratory rate requires clinical judgment and consideration of several patient-specific factors, such as the patient's baseline respiratory rate and whether the respiratory rate is indicative of significant underlying respiratory or other pathology. A mildly increased respiratory rate (eg, 20 to 22 breaths per minute in an adult), absent other indications of serious illness (eg, hypoxemia, metabolic acidosis, decreased tidal volume, pain), may be transitory and not clinically important. The numeric values included in this definition are provided to allow for consistency in terms of a technical definition of the term tachypnea. Whether a respiratory rate above the technical threshold is clinically meaningful is a matter of persistence, context, and clinical judgment. In addition, the measurement of the respiratory rate is subject to error. A medical textbook states that because there can be significant breath-to-breath variation in respiratory rate, the rate should be assessed for at least 30 seconds, preferably for a full minute.(1) This same textbook also states that new technologies designed to measure the respiratory rate have not proved to be clinically useful.(1)

Tachypnea absent

- Tachypnea[A][B] absent, as indicated by **1 or more** of the following:
  - Respiratory rate less than or equal to 20 breaths per minute in adult[A][B](1)
  - Respiratory rate less than or equal to 18 breaths per minute in child 13 to 17 years of age[A][B](2)
  - Respiratory rate less than or equal to 22 breaths per minute in child 6 to 12 years of age[A][B](2)
  - Respiratory rate less than or equal to 25 breaths per minute in child 3 to 5 years of age[A][B](2)
  - Respiratory rate less than or equal to 30 breaths per minute in child 1 or 2 years of age[A][B](2)
  - Respiratory rate less than or equal to 40 breaths per minute in infant 6 to 11 months of age[A][B](2)
  - Respiratory rate less than or equal to 45 breaths per minute in infant 3 to 5 months of age[A][B](2)
  - Respiratory rate less than or equal to 55 breaths per minute in infant 1 or 2 months of age[A][B](2)

References

1. Schriger DL. Approach to the patient with abnormal vital signs. In: Goldman L, Cooney KA, editors. Goldman-Cecil Medicine. 27th ed. Elsevier; 2024:32-35.
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rate, the rate should be assessed for at least 30 seconds, preferably for a full minute.(1) This same textbook also states that new technologies designed to measure the respiratory rate have not proved to be clinically useful.(1)

Temperature status acceptable

- Temperature status acceptable, as indicated by **1 or more** of the following(1)(2)(3):
  - Temperature less than 100.5 degrees F (38.1 degrees C) (oral) and greater than 96.8 degrees F (36 degrees C) (rectal)
  - Temperature as expected for disease process and appropriate for management at next level of care

References

1. Nield LS, Kamat D. Fever. In: Kliegman RM, et al., editors. Nelson Textbook of Pediatrics. 22nd ed. Elsevier; 2025:1640-1642.
2. Melia MT. Approach to fever or suspected infection in the normal host. In: Goldman L, Cooney KA, editors. Goldman-Cecil Medicine. 27th ed. Elsevier; 2024:1845-1851.
3. Sifri CD. Approach to fever and suspected infection in the immunocompromised host. In: Goldman L, Cooney KA, editors. Goldman-Cecil Medicine. 27th ed. Elsevier; 2024:1851-1862.

Vascular, soft tissue, and wound status acceptable

- Vascular, soft tissue, and wound status acceptable, as indicated by **1 or more** of the following(1)(2)(3)(4):
  - No vascular, soft tissue, or wound problems
  - Status acceptable, as indicated by **ALL** of the following:
    - No significant ischemia
    - No Bacteremia
    - No evidence of compartment syndrome
    - Neuromotor function at baseline or expected level of recovery and appropriate for management at next level of care
    - No new wound dehiscence or hematoma that cannot be managed at next level of care
    - Tissue necrosis absent, or treatment plan appropriate for next level of care
    - Vascular, soft tissue, and wound management appropriate for next level of care

References

1. Creager MA, Loscalzo J. Arterial diseases of the extremities. In: Loscalzo J, Fauci A, Kasper D, Hauser S, Longo D, Jameson JL, editors. Harrison's Principles of Internal Medicine. 21st ed. McGraw Hill Education; 2022:2107-2115.
2. Raja AS. Peripheral vascular trauma. In: Walls RM, editor. Rosen's Emergency Medicine: Concepts and Clinical Practice. 10th ed. Elsevier; 2023:429-437.e2.
3. Simon BC, Hern HG. Wound management principles. In: Walls RM, editor. Rosen's Emergency Medicine: Concepts and Clinical Practice. 10th ed. Elsevier; 2023:651-665.e2.
4. Osborn PM, Schmidt AH. Diagnosis and management of acute compartment syndrome. Journal of the American Academy of Orthopedic Surgeons 2021;29(5):183-188. DOI: 10.5435/JAAOS-D-19-00858.

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