PITA: Pandemic Influenza Triage Algorithm

When to use the PITA

- Pandemic declared
- Patient presents with suspected influenza or potential influenza exposure

1. **Is resuscitation required?**
   - Yes
   - No

2. **Is patient toxic and/or at high risk for deterioration or hospitalization?**
   - Yes
   - No

3. **Does patient have significant abnormalities in vital signs?**
   - Yes
   - No
   - See Note 2

4. **Does patient need a workup and multiple interventions?**
   - Yes
   - No
   - See Note 3

5. **Does patient need only an exam and discharge to home?**
   - Yes
   - No
   - See Note 5

See Notes for full details.
Note 1. Is resuscitation required?

**Airway**
- Inability to protect/maintain airway (respiratory failure/exhaustion)
- Needing interventions like BVM ventilation, intubation, or BiPAP/CPAP

**Breathing**
- Oxygen saturation <90%
- Severe respiratory distress
- Breathing:
  - Oxygen saturation <90%
  - Severe respiratory distress
  - Breathing fast or slow
  - Increased work of breathing (e.g., some nasal flaring, mild retractions, or grunting)
  - Infants – inability to feed

**Cyanosis**

**Circulation**
- Cardiopulmonary arrest
- Weak, thready, or absent pulse
- Cool, clammy
- Marked pallor, delayed capillary refill, mottling
- Needing interventions like ACLS or PALS resuscitation, large volumes of fluid, or vasopressors

**Mental status**
- Unresponsive – a patient that is either nonverbal and not following commands acutely or requires noxious stimuli (P or U on AVPU scale)
- Strikingly agitated or irritable
- Active seizures
- Infants – decreased responsiveness and poor muscle tone

Note 2. Is patient toxic and/or at high risk for deterioration or hospitalization?

**Toxic Appearance**

**Respiratory**
- Oxygen saturation 90 or 91%
- Moderate respiratory distress
- Shortness of breath
- Breathing:
  - Fast or slow
  - Increased work of breathing (e.g., some nasal flaring, mild retractions, or grunting)
- Infants – inability to feed

**Neurological**
- Acute mental status changes (change from baseline):
  - Unable to follow simple commands
  - Confused/lethargic/disoriented

**High Risk for Deterioration/Hospitalization**

**High Risk**
Assign Level 2 if patient has influenza-like illness (ILI) symptoms and is in high-risk group (consult CDC website for current list of high-risk groups for influenza), including but not limited to:

- Immunosuppressed patients (including immunosuppression caused by HIV or by medication, such as chemotherapy or chronic steroids)
- Comorbidities/Considerations
  - Consider assigning Level 2 for patients with these considerations or comorbid conditions who present with ILI (especially with abnormalities in airway, breathing, circulation, and mental status):
    - Asthma – moderate to severe
    - COPD, cystic fibrosis or other chronic lung disease
    - Serious congenital heart disease
    - Congestive heart failure
    - Renal disease – on dialysis
    - Sickle cell disease or other serious anemias
    - Chronic neurologic or neuromuscular conditions
    - Chronic metabolic, hepatic, or hematologic disorders
    - Elderly
    - Residents of chronic care facilities

**Does patient have significant abnormalities in vital signs?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>RR</th>
<th>RR</th>
<th>Temperature Cribus (Fahrenheit)</th>
<th>Systolic BP</th>
<th>Rate</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&lt;3mo</td>
<td>&gt;40</td>
<td>&gt;60</td>
<td>&gt;100</td>
<td>&gt;38 (100.4)</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&lt;1y</td>
<td>&gt;25</td>
<td>&gt;40</td>
<td>&gt;100</td>
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<tr>
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<td>&gt;16</td>
<td>&gt;20</td>
<td>&gt;50</td>
<td>&gt;38 (100.4)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

*Recommendation: When fever exceeds 38°C (100.4°F), rate patients aged 1-28 days as Level 2, and consider rating patients aged 1-3 months as Level 2.

*Assess perfusion in children using capillary refill and skin color.

*This algorithm is designed to assist healthcare professionals and those under their supervision in triaging patients with ILI. It is not meant as a substitute for sound clinical judgment.

Note 3. Does patient need a workup and multiple interventions?

**Interventions may include:**
- Chest radiograph
- Laboratory studies (complete blood count, electrolytes, and cultures)
- Intravenous (IV) fluids and medications
- Nebulized medications
- Oxygen

**Consider Level 3 for patients with:**
- Significant past medical history
- Worsening or relapse of influenza-like illness symptoms
- Severe or persistent vomiting requiring IV volume replacement

Note 4. Does patient need minimal interventions?

**Minimal interventions (e.g., no more than one) may include those in Note 3 or:**
- Medication by metered dose inhaler (MDI)
- Oral medications

**Consider Level 4 for patients who may have influenza, but are stable and:**
- Hospitalization is unlikely
- May have psychosocial risk factors that limit their ability to do self-care, such as elderly living alone or homeless

Note 5. Does patient need only an exam and discharge to home?

No defined interventions needed (such as those listed in Notes 3 and 4)

Patient will receive exam and discharge education, and may receive prescriptions