

Triaging Alerts Overview

Responding to RED alerts - Call patient and consider asking the following questions:

Weight Gain

- Did you step onto the center of the scale?
- Were you holding onto anything or were you unsteady?
- Are you having increased difficulty breathing?
- Have you taken your medications today?
- Do you have swelling in your feet/legs or anywhere else?
- Did you dress differently today?
- Did any of your meds change?
- Has the scale been moved?
- See *“Obtaining Accurate Weight Readings”*

Weight Loss

- Are you dressed differently?
- Does your swelling look decreased?
- Do you feel weak or dizzy?
- Are you more unsteady on your feet?
- Did you hang onto anything when you were standing on scale?
- How is your appetite, have you been eating?
- Did any of your medications change?
- Have you had any nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea? Continue by inquiring about specifics.

Common causes when patient is asymptomatic and answers no to all questions:

- Patient dresses differently everyday (encourage them to wear same type of clothing).
- Patient is unsteady and is holding on to something (wall, walker, counter etc.).
- Scale doesn't clear carpet.

Blood Pressure (Hypotension or Hypertension)

- Did you place the blood pressure cuff correctly?
- Have you taken your medications today? (If not have patient take meds and retest in an appropriate time frame, depending on the medications).
- What kind of activity were you doing prior to taking your vital signs?
- Were you sitting still, talking, coughing etc.?
- What have you been eating?
- Have you had any medication changes?
- Incorrect placement of BP cuff on arm - observe and re-instruct patient if needed.
- Incorrect cuff size
- Patient Positioning: Seated position, Feet flat on the floor, arm supported at heart level

Triaging Alerts Overview

- Is patient moving during collection of vital signs?
- Common causes of variable blood pressure:
See "Obtaining Accurate Blood Pressure Readings"

Low SpO2 readings (Desaturation)

- Can the patient talk to you?
- Did you have the finger sensor on securely?
- Could you have put the sensor on the same arm as the BP cuff?
- Are you having difficulty breathing?
- Are you lightheaded or dizzy?
- Do you have chest pain?
- Are your hands or fingers cold?
- What were you doing prior to taking your vital signs?
- Did you take your medications?
- Did you use your (nebulizer, inhaler) before taking your vital signs?

Common causes:

- Poor perfusion
- Nail Polish
- Oximeter not connected to patient or monitor
- Improper sensor placement
- *See "Obtaining Accurate SPO2 Readings"*

Heart Rate:

- Are you having shortness of breath?
- Are you having chest pain?
- Do you have a fever?
- Are you feeling weak or dizzy today?
- Have you taken your meds?
- What type of activity were you doing prior to taking vital signs?
- If pulse is erratic, intermittent or incorrect; does the patient have A-FIB?

Responding to Blue Alerts (No Limits Set)

A blue alert indicates that the vital signs alert limits have not been set.

- Set alerts manually or by using Smart Limits.
- Review and respond to vitals accordingly.

Responding to Orange Alerts (Transmit error)

A transmit error indicates there is a transmission problem. A call to the patient may be needed.

- Is the monitor unplugged?
- Was the electricity off at the scheduled time?

Triaging Alerts Overview

- Check that the serial number on the monitor is the same as the serial number assigned in the system.

Responding to Orange Alerts (Empty Packet)

An empty packet indicates an empty set of vital signs, meaning monitor went off but patient didn't do anything. An 'empty' packet could also indicate a test message was sent.

Call to verify if the patient is home. Ask:

- Are you OK? We expected your vital sign readings at the usual time.
- Were you away from the monitor?
- Did you hear the monitor go off?
- Is there a reason you didn't respond?
- Can you please retest for me?

If the patient does not answer:

- Try calling again within a reasonable timeframe
- Depending on what is known about the patient circumstances, call the appropriate contact person. The intention is to determine that there is not an emergency situation.

Responding to Yellow alerts (Missing Data- Incomplete)

A yellow alert indicates that patient data is missing for one or more vitals.

Call the patient and ask:

- We're missing your (BP, weight, oxygen) reading from your scheduled test today, did you have trouble doing your vital signs today?"
- Can you please retest for me?