

# TRUE TRIAGE

## Cardiac

Cardiac arrest (non-traumatic)  
Cardiac arrest (traumatic)  
Chest pain (cardiac features)  
Chest pain  
(non-cardiac features)  
Palpitations/ Irregular heartbeat  
Hypertension  
General weakness  
Syncope/ pre-syncope  
Oedema, generalised  
Bilateral leg swelling/ oedema  
Cool pulseless limb  
Unilateral hot red limb

## Respiratory

Shortness of breath  
Respiratory arrest  
Cough/ congestion  
Hyperventilation  
Haemoptysis  
Foreign body - resp tract  
Allergic reaction  
Stridor  
Wheezing - sole complaint  
Apnoeic spells in baby

## Neurological

Altered level of consciousness  
Confusion  
Vertigo  
Headache  
Seizure  
Gait disturbance/ ataxia  
Head injury  
Tremor  
Extreme weakness  
Stroke/ possible stroke/ TIA  
Sensory loss/ parasthesia  
Floppy child

## Gastrointestinal

Abdominal pain  
Anorexia  
Constipation  
Diarrhoea  
Foreign body - upper GI  
Foreign body - lower GI  
Groin pain/ mass  
Vomiting and/or nausea  
Rectal/ perineal pain  
Vomiting blood  
Blood in stool/ melaena  
Jaundice  
Hiccoughs  
Abdominal mass/ distension  
Anal/ rectal trauma  
Feeding difficulty in newborn  
Neonatal jaundice

## Obstetrics/ Gynaecology

Menstrual problems  
Foreign body - vagina  
Vaginal discharge  
Sexual assault  
Vaginal bleed  
Labial swelling  
Pregnancy issues < 20 weeks  
Pregnancy issues > 20 weeks  
Vaginal pain/ itch

## Genito-urinary

Flank pain  
Haematuria  
Genital discharge/ lesion  
Penile swelling  
Scrotal pain and/ or swelling  
Urinary retention  
UTI complaints  
Oiguria  
Polyuria  
Genital trauma

## Orthopaedic

Back pain  
Traumatic back/ spine injury  
Amputation  
Upper limb pain  
Lower limb pain  
Upper limb injury  
Lower limb injury  
Joint swelling  
Paediatric gait disorder/ pain  
Cast check

## Trauma

Major trauma - penetrating  
Major trauma - blunt  
Isolated chest trauma  
- penetrating  
Isolated chest trauma - blunt  
Isolated abdo trauma  
- penetrating  
isolated abdo trauma - blunt

## Skin

Bite  
Sting  
Abrasion  
Laceration/ puncture  
Burn  
Blood/ body fluid exposure  
Pruritis  
Rash  
Localised swelling/ redness  
Breast redness/ tenderness  
Lumps/ bumps/ callouses  
Rule out infection  
Cyanosis  
Spontaneous bruising  
Foreign body - skin  
Wound check/ dressing change  
Removal staples/ sutures

## Eye

Chemical exposure - eye  
Foreign body - eye  
Visual disturbance  
Eye pain  
Red eye, discharge  
Photophobia  
Diplopia - double vision  
Periorbital swelling  
Eye trauma  
Eye review

## ENT - Ears

Earache  
Foreign body-ear  
Loss of hearing  
Tinnitus  
Discharge - ear  
Ear injury

## ENT - Nose

Nosebleed  
Nose congestion/ hayfever  
Foreign body-nose  
URTI  
Nasal trauma

## ENT - Throat

Dental/ gum problems  
Facial trauma  
Sore throat  
Neck swelling/ pain  
Neck trauma  
Difficulty swallowing/ dysphagia  
Facial pain (not trauma or dental)

## Substance misuse

Substance misuse/ intoxication  
Overdose ingestion  
Substance withdrawal

## Mental health & psychological

Depression/ suicidal/ DSH  
Anxiety/ situational crisis  
Hallucinations/ delusions  
Insomnia  
Violent/ homicidal behaviour  
Social problem  
Bizarre behaviour  
Concern for patient's welfare  
Paediatric disruptive behaviour

## Environmental

Frostbite / cold injury  
Noxious inhalation  
Electrical injury  
Chemical exposure  
Hypothermia  
Near drowning

## General/ minor

Exposure to comm disease  
Fever  
Hyperglycaemia  
Hypoglycaemia  
Direct referral for consultation  
Imaging tests  
Medical device problem  
Prescription/ medication request  
Ring removal  
Abnormal lab tests  
Pallor/ Anaemia  
Post-op complications  
Inconsolable crying in infants  
Congenital problems (child)  
Minor complaint (other)

# TRUE TRIAGE

## Immediate life threat

Cardiac arrest  
Respiratory arrest  
Immediate risk to airway  
RR <10/min  
Extreme respiratory distress  
BP < 80 (adult) or severely shocked child/infant  
Unresponsive or responds to pain only (GCS < 9)  
Ongoing/prolonged seizure  
Intravenous overdose and unresponsive or hypoventilation  
Major trauma requiring trauma team activation  
Trauma with shock or GCS < 13  
**Behavioural / psychiatric**  
- Immediate threat of dangerous violence

# 1

## Imminent life threat Time critical Ix / Tx Pain - very severe (< 10 mins)

Severe stridor or drooling  
Severe respiratory distress  
Circulatory compromise  
- clammy or mottled skin  
- HR < 50 or >150 (adult)  
- BP < 100  
- severe blood loss  
Chest pain - likely cardiac  
Blood glucose < 3 mmol/l  
Drowsy, GCS < 13 any cause  
Anaphylaxis (no airway threat)  
Acute hemiparesis/dysphasia  
Fever with signs of lethargy  
Suspected meningococcaemia  
Acid or alkali splash to eye  
Severe trauma  
- major fracture/ amputation  
Significant sedative or toxic ingestion e.g. TCA or envenomation  
Severe pain suggesting PE, AAA or ectopic pregnancy  
**Behavioural / psychiatric**  
- violent or aggressive  
- active threat to self or others  
- requires or has required restraint

# 2

## Potential life threat, limb threat Urgent Ix / Tx Pain - severe (< 30 mins)

Severe hypertension  
Moderately severe blood loss  
Moderate shortness of breath  
O<sub>2</sub> Sat 90 – 95%  
Blood glucose >16 mmol/l  
Seizure (now GCS >13)  
Any fever if immunosuppressed e.g. oncology patient, steroid Rx  
Head injury with LOC- now alert  
Chest pain likely non-cardiac  
Abdominal pain *without* high risk features – mod severe or patient age >65 years  
Trauma - high-risk history  
Moderate limb injury  
- deformity, severe laceration, crushed limb, altered sensation, acutely absent pulse, pain on passive stretch  
Stable neonate  
Child at risk of abuse/suspected non-accidental injury  
**Behavioural / psychiatric**  
- very distressed  
- ongoing risk of self-harm  
- psychotic/ thought disordered  
- agitated / withdrawn  
- potentially aggressive

# 3

## Potential limb threat Complex / requiring Ix / Tx Pain - not severe (<1hr)

Normal vital signs  
Mild haemorrhage  
Foreign body aspiration  
Chest injury without rib pain  
Difficulty swallowing  
[ all without resp distress ]  
Minor head injury, no LOC  
Vomiting or diarrhoea without dehydration  
Eye prob/FB normal vision  
Minor limb trauma requiring investigation/ treatment  
- sprained ankle  
- possible fracture  
- uncomplicated laceration  
Non-specific abdominal pain  
Tight cast, no neurovascular impairment  
Swollen “hot” joint  
**Behavioural / psychiatric**  
- no immediate risk to self or others

# 4

## No threat to life or limb Non - urgent Pain - minimal

Minor symptoms of existing stable illness  
Minor symptoms of low-risk conditions  
Minor wounds  
- small abrasions  
- minor lacerations (not requiring Tx)  
Scheduled re-visit  
- wound review  
- complex dressings  
Immunisation only  
**Behavioural / psychiatric**  
- known patient with chronic symptoms  
- Social crisis, clinically well patient

# 5