

5. Syncope Algorithm

This clinical pathway is intended to supplement, rather than substitute for, professional judgment and may be changed depending upon a patient's individual needs. Failure to comply with this pathway does not represent a breach of the standard of care.

History of Syncope

Syncope is a symptom complex that is composed of a **brief loss of consciousness** associated with an **inability to maintain postural tone** that "**spontaneously**" (i.e., no postictal period with a rapid recovery) and "**completely**" (no residual neurologic deficit) resolves **without medical intervention**. **Near-syncope** is defined as a patient almost losing consciousness, and it is approached in the same way as syncope.

Consider seizure - tongue biting, head turning during loss of consciousness, no recollection of abnormal behaviour, prolonged limb jerking (lasting minutes), incontinence post-event confusion, and prodromal aura.

Yes

Go to
6. Seizures Algorithm

No

- **Check RBS** – If RBS < 3.3 mmol/L – see **18. Hypoglycaemia Algorithm**
- **12 lead ECG** - Look for evidence of ischemia/infarction, dysrhythmias, atrioventricular blocks, Brugada syndrome (RBBB with J-wave elevation of ≥ 2 mm), prolonged QT interval, ventricular pre-excitation, hypertrophic cardiomyopathy
- **Consider dangerous causes of syncope**
 - **Obstructive causes (pulmonary embolism, aortic dissection)**
 - **Subarachnoid haemorrhage**
 - **Infection/sepsis**
 - **Haemorrhage/hypovolemia e.g. gastrointestinal bleeding, ruptured ectopic pregnancy, ruptured abdominal aortic aneurysm**

None of the above

The San Francisco Syncope Rule (SFSR)

The SFSR uses five factors (**CHESS predictors**) to predict serious adverse outcomes at 7 or 30 days in patients presenting to the ED.

1. History of **C**ongestive Heart Failure
2. **H**aematocrit < **30%** (**Hb** < 10g/dL) (test if clinically indicated)
3. **E**CG abnormality (see above)
4. History of **S**hortness of breath
5. **S**BP < **90 mm Hg** after arrival in the ED

SFSR is associated with a pooled negative predictive value of 97%, sensitivity of 87%, and negative LR of 0.28. Patients with negative SFSR scores had < 3% risk for serious outcomes.

Does the patient have ANY of the 5 SFSR predictors?

Yes

No

Consult a **Physician**

Discharge