



## WRHA Emergency Program Guideline

### Practice Guideline: Acute Coronary Syndrome Standing Orders

**Approved By:**  
WRHA Emergency  
Program Joint Council

**Pages:**  
1 of 11

**Date Approved:**  
September 17, 2018

**Revised Date:**  
NEW

#### 1.0 **INTRODUCTION:**

- 1.1 In the Province of Manitoba, Acute Coronary Syndrome (ACS) including unstable angina, non-ST segment elevation myocardial infarction (non-STEMI), and ST segment elevation myocardial infarction (STEMI) is a major reason for hospitalization and death. Effective therapies and adherence to treatments guidelines have had a major impact on the incidence of ACS mortality.

#### 2.0 **PURPOSE:**

- 2.1 To standardize the care of patients who present to a WRHA Emergency Department (ED)/Urgent Care (UC) with chest pain suggestive of a coronary event.
- 2.2 To rapidly identify and treat patients presenting with a ST Elevation Myocardial Infarction (STEMI).
- 2.3 To identify and determine timing of coronary angiography for patients with non-ST elevation acute coronary syndrome (NSTEMI/Unstable Angina) which includes non-STEMI/unstable angina (UA).
- 2.4 To rule out ACS/chest pain not yet diagnosed (NYD).

#### 3.0 **DEFINITIONS:**

- 3.1 **Acute Coronary Syndrome (ACS):** describes a spectrum of conditions associated with sudden reduced blood flow to the heart and includes ST Elevation Myocardial Infarction (STEMI) and NSTEMI/Unstable Angina).
- 3.2 **Electrocardiogram (EKG):** records the electrical impulse while in a resting state with the use of electrodes placed over the skin.
- 3.3 **Emergency Department (ED):** WRHA Emergency Departments and Urgent Care Centres.
- 3.4 **Emergency Department Information System (EDIS):** part of the electronic patient record (EPR) which facilitates patient flow and timely access to clinical data. EDIS functions as an electronic patient tracking and display board, computerized triage, lab and radiology results reporting, discharge instruction and other electronic clinical documentation tool.
- 3.5 **First Medical Contact (FMC):** is the time of triage at the hospital or arrival of a paramedic at the side of the patient for emergency medical services (EMS) users.
- 3.6 **Health Professional:** a person who exercises skill and judgment in providing health care and who is licensed or registered under an Act of the Legislature or who is a member of a class of persons designated as health professionals in *The Personal Health Information Regulation*.

<b>Guideline Name:</b> Acute Coronary Syndrome Standing Orders	<b>Guideline Number:</b>	<b>Page:</b> Page 2 of 11
---	--------------------------	------------------------------

- 3.7 Non-ST Elevation Acute Coronary Syndrome (NSTEMI):** refers to unstable angina and Non-STEMI, both are closely related conditions whose pathogenesis and clinical presentations are similar but vary in severity. The conditions differ primarily by whether the ischemia is severe enough to cause myocardial damage leading to detectable quantities of myocardial injury biomarkers.
- 3.8 ST Segment Elevation Myocardial Infarction (STEMI):** clinical syndrome defined by characteristic symptoms of myocardial ischemia in association with persistent EKG ST elevation and subsequent release of biomarkers of myocardial necrosis. The care for STEMI is the restoration of blood flow in the coronary artery. There are two treatment options for “reperfusion” modalities: primary percutaneous coronary intervention (PPCI) and fibrinolytics.
- 3.9 Triage:** is a sorting process utilizing knowledge and critical thinking in which an experienced Registered Nurse assesses patients quickly on their arrival to the ED for:
- 3.9.1** rapid assessment of the patient’s presenting complaint;
  - 3.9.2** assigning an acuity level;
  - 3.9.3** directing the patient to appropriate location and resources;
  - 3.9.4** ensures reassessment of the patient. (NENA Position Statement, 2014).
- 3.10 Triage Nurse(s):** experienced emergency nurse(s) who have completed the WRHA Emergency Triage Orientation and are assigned to either the Triage or reassessment role.
- 3.11 Primary Percutaneous Coronary Intervention (PPCI):** is a revascularization technique to treat coronary artery disease. It involves widening of the coronary artery, using a balloon catheter to dilate the artery from within. A coronary artery stent is usually placed in the artery after dilatation.

**4.0 USED BY:**

- 4.1** WRHA Emergency Program Health Professionals.

**5.0 GUIDELINE:**

**5.1 Triage:**

- 5.1.1** All persons presenting to an ED are to be Triaged by a Triage Nurse according to CTAS guidelines and *WRHA Policy 110.080.010 Emergency Program Triage* available at: <http://home.wrha.mb.ca/corp/policy/policy.php>.
- 5.1.2** Patients presenting to triage complaining of chest pain or discomfort suggestive of ACS (see **Appendix A** for guidelines for the identification of patients with ACS) should be given high priority at triage. Patient with suspect ACS must have a **screening electrocardiogram (EKG) immediately without delay**. This will reduce time to treatment for STEMI patients and rule out malignant arrhythmias at time of presentation.
  - 5.1.2.1** 12 lead EKG target is to perform within 10 minutes and interpreted within 5 minutes by emergency physician (EP).
  - 5.1.2.2** Indications for a 15 lead EKG are:

<b>Guideline Name:</b> Acute Coronary Syndrome Standing Orders	<b>Guideline Number:</b>	<b>Page:</b> Page 3 of 11
---	--------------------------	------------------------------

- 5.1.2.2.1 Cardiac chest pain is GREATER than 15 minutes;
- 5.1.2.2.2 12 lead EKG showing ST depression in V1 and V2 with prominent R waves;
- 5.1.2.2.3 12 lead EKG showing signs of acute inferior MI.

- 5.1.3 Ensure patient has received the following medications:
  - 5.1.3.1 ASA within the last 24 hours if there are no allergies or contraindications; and
  - 5.1.3.2 Nitroglycerin if there are no allergies and systolic pressure is GREATER than 90 mmHg.
- 5.1.4 Determine and document the utilization of sildenafil (Viagra), vardenafil (Levitra) within the last 24 hours and tadalafil (Cialis) within the last 48 hours in the Triage note- *Reason For Visit* section.
- 5.1.5 Triage Nurse/ED nurse can initiate ACS standing orders for any suspect ACS patients.

## 5.2 ACS General Orders:

- 5.2.1 The order sets reflect the MB ACS Network recommended standards for the evaluation and treatment of suspected cardiac chest pain. The standards address five key areas: 1) Rapid identification of STEMI, 2) Rapid treatment of STEMI (Primary PCI and fibrinolysis for those patients whom transfer to the SBH Cardiac Centre cannot be accomplished within target of 100 minutes from EKG diagnosis), 3) Rapid transfer of those patients who received fibrinolysis to the SBH Cardiac Centre, 4) triage for timely coronary angiogram for NSTEMI/ACS, and 5) best practice pre and post hospital discharge.
- 5.2.2 The EP must determine if the patient is a STEMI or NSTEMI/Unstable angina, (see **Appendix D: Chest Pain with Cardiac Features Algorithm**) and select the correct standing order set either ACS STEMI or ACS Non- STEMI/Unstable Angina.
- 5.2.3 General orders on the standard orders (**Appendix B,C**) are identified with a:
  - 5.2.3.1 black box (■) do not require physician order and can be initiated by the nurse as long as there are no allergies and the blood pressure criteria is met or preselected for order entry sites;
  - 5.2.3.2 blank box (□) require a physician's order to activate them. To activate the physician will select the box (☑) on the NSTEMI or STEMI physician order sheet.
- 5.2.4 Complete and document vital signs which include oxygen saturations (maintain oxygen saturations to 90% with oxygen therapy if applicable) and documentation of ST segments: q15min x 4, then q30min x 2 and q1hr until discharge or admission.
  - 5.2.4.1 Complete and document vital signs q15min with ongoing chest pain and/or unstable vital signs.
- 5.2.5 Continuous cardiac monitoring with ST segment monitoring and documentation (see 5.2.4).

<b>Guideline Name:</b> Acute Coronary Syndrome Standing Orders	<b>Guideline Number:</b>	<b>Page:</b> Page 4 of 11
---	--------------------------	------------------------------

- 5.2.6 Mount and analyze initial rhythm strip and prn with rhythm changes.
- 5.2.7 Draws labs as per standing orders.
- 5.2.8 For continued unrelieved chest pain, Morphine IV can be ordered by physician and administered only if systolic blood pressure BP is GREATER than 90 mmHg. Prescriber must be notified after a total of 3 doses (total 7.5 mg)

### 5.3 Diagnosis of STEMI:

- 5.3.1 If STEMI diagnosis is certain **do not delay** treatment. The *WRHA Emergency Program ACS STEMI Standing Orders* is to be used (see example in **Appendix B**):
  - 5.3.1.1 Arrange **immediate** appropriate transport by EP or nurse (204-986-2622) to PCI Center first (see **Appendix E: WRHA Cardiac Sciences STEMI Diagnosis**), state there is a “Code STEMI XXX Hospital (add hospital site e.g. “Code STEMI Grace Hospital”) requiring transport. **The following patient information must be ready to provide inter facility transfer coordinator (IFTC): location department/room, name, if the patient requires transvenous pacing, inotropes, vasopressors or is intubated;**
  - 5.3.1.2 Call the interventional cardiologist on call through SBH Hospital Paging (204-237-2053).
- 5.3.2 If STEMI **diagnosis is uncertain**, call local on call cardiologist through site procedure or outside call cardiologist to discuss (204-237-2053).
- 5.3.3 If the patient is able to arrive to St Boniface Hospital (SBH) **within 100 minutes from EKG Diagnosis** STEMI patients should be transferred for primary coronary intervention (PCI). Refer to *WRHA Emergency Program ACS STEMI Standing Orders* section 1. *Candidate for PCI*.
- 5.3.4 If patient transfer to SBH will be **GREATER than 100 minutes** than:
  - 5.3.4.1 If patient is a candidate for fibrinolysis administer fibrinolysis at the site. Refer to *WRHA Emergency Program ACS ST Elevation Myocardial Infarction (STEMI) Standing Orders* section 2. *Candidate for Fibrinolysis, Non Primary PCI Candidate* (see example **Appendix B**).
  - 5.3.4.2 The EP will immediately:
    - 5.3.4.2.1 arrange for immediate transfer for coronary angiogram;
    - 5.3.4.2.2 call “outside call cardiologist” (204-237-2053) to discuss patient;
    - 5.3.4.2.3 complete cath lab referral form and send with patient;
    - 5.3.4.2.4 instruct ambulance to page interventional cardiologist on call (204-237-2053) **if ongoing pain 30 minutes from SBH**.
  - 5.3.4.3 If patient is not a candidate for fibrinolysis the EP will contact the interventional cardiologist on call to discuss case.

### 5.4 Diagnosis of NSTEMACS (Non-STEMI or Unstable Angina):

- 5.4.1 Once diagnosed by the EP all suspect NSTEMACS patients should be risk stratified using the TIMI Risk Score for UA/Non-STEMI (**Appendix D: WRHA Cardiac Sciences Chest Pain with Cardiac Features**) by the EP:
  - 5.4.1.1 **Unstable ACS (non-STEMI):** refractory angina, heart failure, life

<b>Guideline Name:</b> Acute Coronary Syndrome Standing Orders	<b>Guideline Number:</b>	<b>Page:</b> Page 5 of 11
---	--------------------------	------------------------------

threatening arrhythmias or hemodynamic instability;

- 5.4.1.1.1** • Call outside call cardiologist (204-237-2053) or local specialist to discuss;
- Complete Cath Lab Referral form send with patient or fax (204-258-1089);
  - Administer treatment for likely ACS (use *WRHA Emergency Program Non-STEMI/UA Standing Orders*, see example in **Appendix C**);
  - Arrange appropriate transport - **Target transfer to cath lab LESS than 120 minutes from first medical contact (FMC).**
- 5.4.1.2 High Risk ACS (non-STEMI):** recurring chest pain, dynamic ST-T changes;
- 5.4.1.2.1** • Call outside call cardiologist (204-237-2053) or local specialist to discuss;
- Complete Cath Lab Referral form send with patient or fax (204-258-1089);
  - Administer treatment for likely ACS (use *WRHA Emergency Program Non-STEMI/UA Standing Orders*);
  - Arrange appropriate transport - **Target transfer to cath lab LESS than 24 hours from FMC;**
- 5.4.1.3 Intermediate Risk ACS (non-STEMI):** **TIMI risk score 3 or GREATER** excluding Unstable ACS or High RISK ACS patients;
- 5.4.1.3.1** If patient has a TIMI risk score 3 or GREATER:
- Complete Cath Lab Referral form and fax (204-258-1089);
  - Administer treatment for likely ACS (use *WRHA Emergency Program Non-STEMI/UA Standing Orders*);
  - Arrange appropriate transport - **Target transfer to cath lab LESS than 72 hours from FMC.**
- 5.4.1.4 TIMI Score 2 or LESS; CONSIDER:**
- 5.4.1.4.1** Pre discharge graded exercise test (GXT) if available;
- 5.4.1.4.2** Discharge home with follow-up cardiology/internal medicine;
- 5.4.1.4.3** If unsure call cardiologist (204-237-2053) or local specialist to discuss patient;
- 5.4.1.4.4** If smoker; assess for nicotine withdrawal, consider nicotine replacement therapy (NRT) and referral to Smoker Helpline ([www.smokerhelpline.ca](http://www.smokerhelpline.ca)).
- 5.4.1.5** NRT should be offered to the NSTEMI population.

## **6.0 DOCUMENTATION:**

- 6.1** All pertinent patient information must be documented in the patient health record (PHR), including but not limited to:
- 6.1.1** pertinent history including past medications;
  - 6.1.2** all assessments;
  - 6.1.3** vital signs (includes oxygen saturations with any oxygen therapy to maintain oxygen saturations and documentation of ST segments with every VS: q15min x 4, then q30min x 2 and q1hr until discharge or admission);
  - 6.1.4** pain assessments including description of pain, interventions and reassessments;

<b>Guideline Name:</b> Acute Coronary Syndrome Standing Orders	<b>Guideline Number:</b>	<b>Page:</b> Page 6 of 11
---	--------------------------	------------------------------

- 6.1.5 any procedures or tests that have been completed;
- 6.1.6 medications given with date and time;
- 6.1.7 safe patient handover documentation for shift to shift and inpatient/IFT transfers.

## 7.0 **GUIDELINE CONTACT:**

7.1 WRHA Emergency Program Quality Process Improvement Officer.

## 8.0 **REFERENCES:**

- 8.1 Cardiac Care Network. (2013). Management of Acute Coronary Syndromes. Retrieved from:  
[http://www.ccn.on.ca/ccn\\_public/uploadfiles/files/ACS\\_management\\_in\\_remote\\_communities\\_FINAL\\_Sept\\_2\\_013.pdf](http://www.ccn.on.ca/ccn_public/uploadfiles/files/ACS_management_in_remote_communities_FINAL_Sept_2_013.pdf).
- 8.2 O’Gara, P. (2012). 2013 ACCF/AHA Guideline for the Management of ST-Elevation Myocardial Infarction. Retrieved from: [https://www.heart.org/idc/groups/heart-public/@wcm/@mwa/documents/downloadable/ucm\\_453635.pdf](https://www.heart.org/idc/groups/heart-public/@wcm/@mwa/documents/downloadable/ucm_453635.pdf).
- 8.3 Roffi, M. (2016). 2015 ESC Guidelines for the Management of Acute Coronary Syndromes in patients without Persistent ST Segment Elevation. European Heart Journal, 37, 267-315.
- 8.4 WRHA Cardiac Sciences Program. (2017). Chest Pain with Cardiac Features-Algorithm.
- 8.5 WRHA Cardiac Sciences Program. (2017). Recommended Standards for the Evaluation and Treatment of Suspected Cardiac Chest Pain.
- 8.6 WRHA Cardiac Sciences Program. (2014). Standard Work Sheet: 15 Lead EKG.
- 8.7 WRHA Cardiac Sciences Program. (2017). STEMI Diagnosis-Algorithm. Retrieved from: [http://www.umanitoba.ca/medicine/units/cardiac\\_sciences/ebptools.htm](http://www.umanitoba.ca/medicine/units/cardiac_sciences/ebptools.htm).

<b>Guideline Name:</b> Acute Coronary Syndrome Standing Orders	<b>Guideline Number:</b>	<b>Page:</b> Page 7 of 11
---	--------------------------	------------------------------

### Appendix A

<b>Identification of Suspect ACS Patients by the Triage Nurse or RN</b>
<b>Patients with the following signs and symptoms require immediate assessment by the triage nurse for the initiation of the ACS Standing Orders:</b>
•chest pain, pressure, tightness, or heaviness; pain in neck, jaw, shoulders, back, or one or both arms;
•indigestion or "heartburn", nausea and/or vomiting associated with chest discomfort;
•persistent shortness of breath;
•weakness, dizziness, lightheadedness, loss of consciousness.
<b>Patients with the following symptoms and signs require immediate RN assessment for the initiation of the ACS Standing Orders:</b>
•chest pain or severe epigastric pain, non-traumatic in origin, with components typical of myocardial ischemia or AMI:
•central/substernal compression or crushing chest pain;
•pressure, tightness, heaviness, cramping, burning, aching sensation;
•unexplained indigestion, belching, epigastric pain;
•pain in neck, jaw, shoulders, back, or 1 or both arms;
•associated dyspnea;
•associated nausea and/or vomiting;
•associated diaphoresis.
<b>Patient Medical History and Vital Signs</b>
<b>The triage nurse should take a brief, targeted, initial history with an assessment of current or past history of:</b>
•coronary artery bypass graft (CABG), PCI, Coronary Artery Disease (CAD), angina on effort, or MI;
•nitroglycerin use to relieve chest discomfort;
•sildenafil (Viagra), vardenafil (Levitra) within the last 24 hours and tadalafil (Cialis) within the last 48 hours;
•risk factors, including smoking, hyperlipidemia, hypertension, diabetes mellitus, family history of CAD, and cocaine or methamphetamine use;
•arrhythmia history should include if the patient has a permanent pacemaker or implantable cardioverter-defibrillator;
•pregnancy complications including gestational hypertension, preeclampsia, eclampsia, hemolysis elevated liver enzymes low platelet count (HELLP)
•regular and recent medication use.
<b>Atypical Presentations:</b>
•women may present more frequently than men with atypical chest pain and symptoms such as epigastric pain and unexplained indigestion;
• patients with diabetes may have atypical presentations due to autonomic dysfunction;
•elderly patients may have atypical symptoms such as generalized weakness, stroke, syncope, or a change in mental status.

\*\*\* Adapted From: Cardiac Care Network-Management of Acute Coronary Syndromes



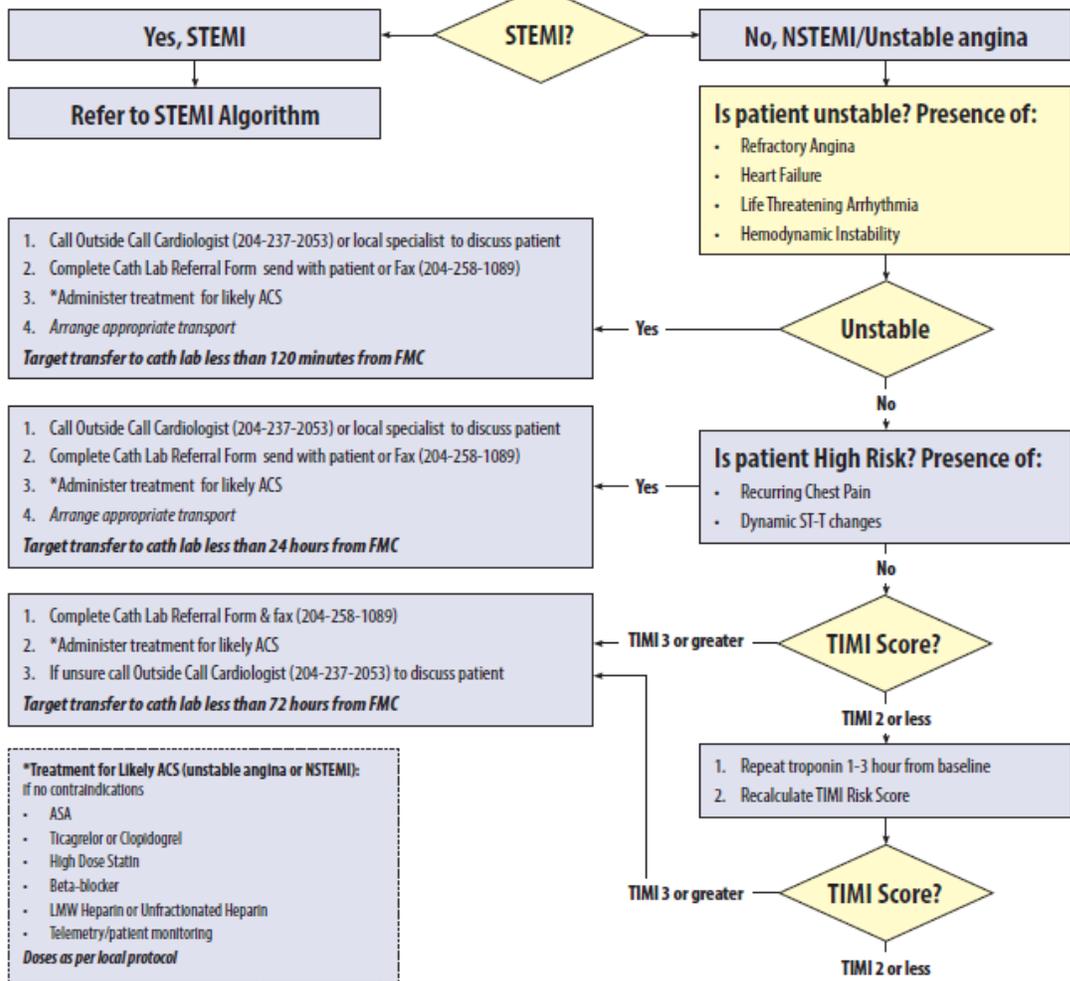


**Appendix D: Chest Pain with Cardiac Features**



**Chest Pain with Cardiac Features**

- First Medical Contact (FMC) Time documented (FMC is the time of triage at the hospital or arrival of a paramedic at the side of the patient for emergency medical services (EMS) users)
- Vital Signs recorded
- 12 lead ECG (target: performed within 10 minutes and interpreted within 5 minutes)



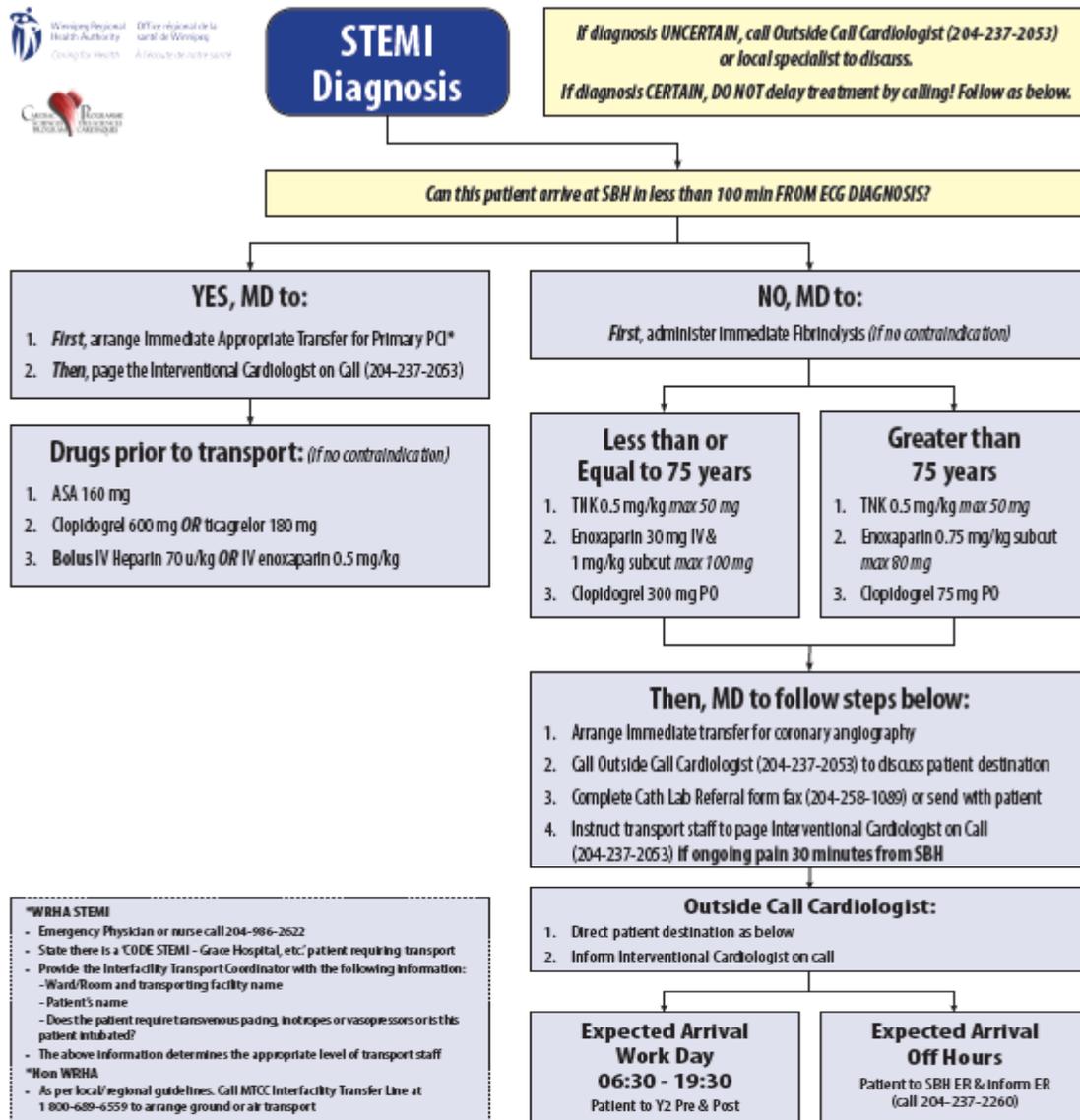
TIMI SCORE CALCULATOR	
TIMI RISK SCORE FOR UA & NSTEMI	
CRITERIA	POINTS
<b>HISTORICAL</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/> Age 65 years or more	1
<input type="checkbox"/> 3 or more Risk Factors for CAD	1
<input type="checkbox"/> Known CAD (stenosis 50% or more)	1
<input type="checkbox"/> Aspirin use in past 7 days	1
<b>PRESENTATION</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/> Recent (24 hours or less) severe angina	1
<input type="checkbox"/> ST segment deviation 0.5 mm or more	1
<input type="checkbox"/> Elevated Cardiac Markers	1
<b>RISK SCORE = TOTAL</b>	<b>0 - 7</b>

ACS RISK STRATIFICATION		
RISK CATEGORY	CRITERIA	RECOMMENDATION FOR TIME TO CORONARY CATHETERIZATION
Unstable ACS (non-STEMI)	Refractory angina, heart failure, life threatening arrhythmias or hemodynamic instability	Coronary angiography within 120 minutes of first medical contact if no contraindications to procedure
High Risk ACS (non-STEMI)	Recurring chest pain and/or dynamic ST changes	Coronary angiography within 24 hours of first medical contact if no contraindications to procedure
Intermediate Risk ACS (non-STEMI)	TIMI Risk Score 3 or higher excluding Unstable ACS or High Risk ACS patients	Coronary angiography within 72 hours of first medical contact if no contraindications to procedure

**Consider:**

- Pre discharge GXT if available
- Discharge home with follow-up Cardiology/Internal Medicine
- If unsure Call Outside Call Cardiologist (204-237-2053) or local specialist to discuss patient
- If smoker, consider NRT and referral to Smoker Helpline ([www.smokerhelpline.ca](http://www.smokerhelpline.ca))

**Appendix E: STEMI Diagnosis**



**Absolute Contraindications**

*As determined by asking the patient the following series of questions:*

- Have you ever had a bleed into your brain?
- Have you ever had a brain aneurysm, a brain tumor, or recent brain or spine surgery (within the past two months)?
- Have you had any significant head or facial trauma within the past three months?
- Have you had a stroke within the past three months?
- Have you had recent major bleeding, or major surgery or a biopsy
- Are you currently pregnant or within one week post-delivery?

*As determined when there is a high Index of suspicion by the clinician*

- Physician suspects acute aortic dissection
- Physician suspects acute pericarditis

**Relative Contraindications**

*As determined by the clinician*

- Any measurement of a blood pressure on this encounter: Systolic BP greater than 180 mmHg and/or diastolic BP greater than 110 mmHg
- Traumatic or prolonged CPR

**Enoxaparin Contraindications**

- Refer to contraindications for fibrinolytics (as above)
- Allergy or hypersensitivity to heparin, pork products or to enoxaparin