Triage Algorithm for Emergency Department Patients With Acute Heart Failure

**Figure 2**

Use this triage algorithm about admission and initial therapy to guide thought processes during admission evaluations rather than as a formal description of admission criteria and administrative processes surrounding admission.

**High Likelihood of HF Diagnosis**

1. **Critically ill at presentation?**
   - Yes → Admit for critical care
   - No → Prior HF history?
2. **Prior HF history?**
   - Yes → Admit for evaluation of new HF
   - No → Marked degree of congestion?*
3. **Marked degree of congestion?***
   - Yes → Admit
   - No → Medical risk/complexity?
4. **Medical risk/complexity?**
   - Medium/high → Admit
   - Low → Need for more information about history/regimen/comorbidities?
5. **Need for more information about history/regimen/comorbidities?**
   - Yes → Obtain information
   - No → Review of triggers, Focused re-education, Limited diagnostic workup
6. **Admit**

---

* Marked leg edema, ascites, or scrotal or perineal edema may be clinical signs of marked congestion. The degree of radiographic and biochemical abnormalities may also indicate the degree of congestion.

**Abbreviations:** ED: emergency department; HF: heart failure