

## GENERAL SURGERY PRIORITY CRITERIA TOOL

***PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY***

Provincial Health Care Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Patient Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Patient Age: \_\_\_\_\_ Sex: [circle one]    **M**    **F**

Principal Diagnosis: 1. \_\_\_\_\_ Check if applicable:

2. \_\_\_\_\_ Cancer proven

3. \_\_\_\_\_ Cancer suspected

Proposed Procedure: 1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

Proposed Date of Surgery: \_\_\_\_\_

Surgeon's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

***Please check the box that most accurately describes the patient's current situation***

**1. Usual frequency of painful episodes/suffering:**

- None (0)
- Occasional (3)
- Often (6)
- Constant (9)

**2. How intense is the pain at its worst?**

- No pain (0)
- Mild (3)
- Moderate (7)
- Severe (11)

**3. Usual intensity of other forms of suffering. Please specify form of suffering – circle all that apply:**

**Nausea or vomiting**

**Itching**

**Fatigue**

**Psychological stress such as anxiety or depression**

**List others:** \_\_\_\_\_

- None (0)
- Mild (4)
- Moderate (8)
- Severe (12)

**4. Degree of impairment in usual activities due to surgical condition:**

- Not impaired at all/mildly impaired (0)
- Able but difficult and/or somewhat impaired (5)
- Able but very difficult and at much reduced level (10)
- Totally dependent (Unable to perform any usual activities) (15)

**5. Recent history of: Major complications of condition  
OR significant physical exam results  
OR significant test results.**

- No (0)
- Yes (8)

**6. Life-expectancy implications of condition without surgery:**

- Minimal threat to life (0)
- Patient faces somewhat reduced life expectancy (10)
- Patient faces substantially reduced life expectancy (15)
- Patient has condition that is likely to be fatal between six months and two years (20)
- Patient has condition that is likely to be fatal within six months (25)

**7. Expected improvement in life-expectancy with surgery:**

- None (0)
- Minimal (5)
- Moderate (10)
- Major (20)

**8. All things considered, how would you rate the urgency or relative priority of this patient?  
(Draw a line across the scale.)**

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**Not Urgent at all** **Extremely Urgent**  
(just short of an emergency)

## WCWL General Surgery Priority Tool Descriptor Guide

The descriptor statements are to be used as a guide and do not represent a complete list of clinical indicators.

<b>Item #1: Usual FREQUENCY of painful episodes/suffering</b>	
Includes, for example: pain, nausea or vomiting, fatigue, itching, psychological stress such as anxiety or depression. This assumes that the patient is taking a reasonable level of oral analgesics that do not interfere with daily activities.	
1. None	Currently, the patient <b>does not experience</b> pain or other forms of suffering (e.g., nausea or vomiting, fatigue, itching, or psychological stress such as anxiety or depression) associated with the surgical condition.
2. Occasional	The patient may experience occasional episodes of pain or other forms of suffering (e.g., nausea or vomiting, fatigue, itching, or psychological stress such as anxiety or depression) associated with the surgical condition. Pain and/or suffering is experienced <b>once a week or less</b> . Also choose this if the patient is aware of a <b>regular trigger that can be avoided</b> (e.g., avoiding certain foods).
3. Often	Patient may experience pain or other forms of suffering (e.g., nausea or vomiting, fatigue, itching, or psychological stress such as anxiety or depression) associated with the surgical condition <b>more than once a week</b> but not sustained or constant. Also choose this if the patient is aware of a <b>regular trigger that cannot be avoided</b> (e.g., cannot eat at all without problem occurring).
4. Constant	Patient is <b>rarely free</b> from pain or other forms of suffering associated with the surgical condition (e.g., nausea or vomiting, fatigue, itching, or psychological stress such as anxiety or depression).

<b>Item #2: How INTENSE is the pain at its worst?</b>	
In your response, consider how the patient would rate his/her level of pain on a scale from 1 to 10.	
1. No pain	- Currently, the patient <b>does not experience</b> pain (i.e., <b>patient pain rating: 0</b> ) and patient has no history of pain associated with the surgical condition.
2. Mild	- Patient <b>may experience</b> pain (i.e., <b>patient pain rating: 1 to 3</b> ) - Patient usually <b>does not require pain medication</b> . - Patient has no history of pain associated with the surgical condition that has necessitated emergency treatment.
3. Moderate	- Patient may <b>experience</b> pain (i.e., <b>patient pain rating: 4 to 7</b> ). - Patient may <b>occasionally need pain medication</b> . - Over the past 3 months, patient may have had one or more acute episodes of pain for which they requested emergency treatment.
4. Severe	- Patient <b>experiences</b> pain <b>most of the time</b> (i.e., <b>patient pain rating: 8 to 10</b> ) - Patient <b>needs pain medication most of the time</b> . - Over the past 3 months, patient may have had one or more acute episodes of pain for which they requested emergency treatment.

<b>Item #3: Usual INTENSITY of other forms of suffering</b>	
Note: If intensity of suffering is Mild, Moderate, or Severe, please identify the form(s) of suffering that the patient experiences (see below). <b>Please score the form of suffering with the greatest degree of severity.</b>	
1. None	- Currently, the patient <b>does not experience</b> other (non-pain) forms of suffering. Suffering may include, but is not limited to, nausea or vomiting, fatigue, itching, or psychological stress such as anxiety or depression.

	- Patient has no history of suffering associated with the surgical condition that has necessitated treatment.
2. Mild	- Patient <b>experiences suffering</b> (non-pain) associated with the surgical condition. Suffering may include, but is not limited to, nausea or vomiting, fatigue, itching, or psychological stress such as anxiety or depression. - Patient <b>has not sought treatment</b> for other forms of suffering associated with the surgical condition.
3. Moderate	- Patient <b>experiences suffering</b> (non-pain). Suffering may include, but is not limited to, nausea or vomiting, fatigue, itching, or psychological stress such as anxiety or depression. - Patient has <b>sought treatment</b> for suffering associated with the surgical condition (e.g., anti-anxiety, anti-depressant, anti-emetic medication). <b>This treatment led to significant improvement in condition.</b>
4. Severe	- Patient <b>experiences intense suffering</b> associated with the surgical condition. Suffering may include, but is not limited to, nausea or vomiting, fatigue, itching, or psychological stress such as anxiety or depression. - Patient <b>has sought treatment for suffering</b> (e.g., anti-anxiety, anti-depressant, anti-emetics medication). <b>This treatment did NOT lead to significant improvement in condition.</b>

<b>0 Item #3: Specify other forms of suffering</b>	
Note: <b>If Intensity of suffering is reported as Mild, Moderate, or Severe</b> , identify the form(s) of suffering that the patient experiences.	
Nausea or vomiting	Circle on form if patient experiences this form of suffering.
Fatigue	Circle on form if patient experiences this form of suffering.
Itching	Circle on form if patient experiences this form of suffering.
Psychological stress such as anxiety or depression.	Circle on form if patient experiences this form of suffering.
List others:	List other form(s) of suffering experienced by patient that are not listed above.

<b>Item #4: Degree of impairment in usual activities due to surgical condition.</b>	
Refers to impairment in role function (e.g., job, housework, independence) or impairment in social activities (e.g., mobility, visiting friends/family, hobbies).	
1. Not impaired at all/mildly impaired.	Currently, the patient <b>can perform all of their daily activities</b> without assistance. They may need to make <b>some minor modifications</b> in their daily routine or for certain tasks.
2. Able but difficult and/or somewhat impaired.	Currently, the patient may need to make <b>moderate adjustments</b> in their daily routine (including limitations in work and recreational activities).
3. Able but very difficult and at much reduced level.	Currently, the patient's activities such as work and recreational activities are <b>significantly reduced</b> , but patient <b>can perform self-care activities</b> of daily living without assistance.
4. Totally dependent (unable to perform an usual activities)	Currently, the patient is unable to perform their usual daily work and recreational activities and <b>requires assistance for all tasks</b> , including self-care.

<b>Item #5: Recent history of: Major complications of condition OR significant physical exam results OR significant test results.</b> Refers to, for example: cholecystitis, pancreatitis, area of tenderness, palpable mass, anemia, or elevated liver enzymes. <b>NOTE: 'Major' refers to clinically significant and 'Recent' refers to the previous three months or current assessment.</b>	
1. No	Patient has not experienced any secondary effects of their condition.
2. Yes	Patient has experienced secondary effects of their condition.

<b>Item #6: Life-expectancy implications of condition without surgery</b>	
Refers to life expectancy implications of surgical condition <b>under the most likely scenario</b> (i.e., even if diagnosis is not known). Ignore co-morbidity. If cancer is the most likely diagnosis, scores 3-5 are most appropriate.	
1. Minimal threat to life	Patient has a condition that poses <b>minimal threat to life</b> without the proposed surgical procedure.
2. Patient faces somewhat reduced life expectancy.	Patient has a condition that has the <b>potential to be fatal in the next six to ten years</b> .
3. Patient faces substantially reduced life expectancy.	Patient has a condition that has the <b>potential to be fatal in the next three to five years</b> .
4. Patient has condition that is likely to be fatal between six months and two years.	Patient has confirmed or suspected cancer or other condition that is likely to be <b>fatal between six months and two years</b> without the proposed surgical procedure.
5. Patient has condition that is likely to be fatal within six months.	Patient has confirmed or suspected cancer or other condition that is likely to be <b>fatal within six months</b> without the proposed surgical procedure.

<b>Item #7: Expected improvement in life-expectancy with surgery</b>	
Refers to life expectancy; does not address improvement in quality of life.	
1. None	Patient has a condition that is a minimal threat to life and the surgical procedure is expected to improve the condition but not extend the life expectancy of the patient. <b>OR</b> The patient has a condition that is likely to reduce life expectancy. The surgical procedure is expected to improve the condition or alleviate symptoms but is not expected to positively impact on the life expectancy of the patient.
2. Minimal	Patient has a condition that is a minimal threat to life or the patient faces somewhat reduced life expectancy. The surgical procedure is expected to improve the condition and may have a minimal positive impact on the life expectancy of the patient. <b>OR</b> The patient has a condition that is likely to reduce life expectancy or be fatal without the procedure. The surgical procedure is expected to make a small impact on the life expectancy of the patient.
3. Moderate  3. Moderate Continued	The surgical procedure is expected to have an impact on the life expectancy of the patient such that the response to Item 6 would be expected to shift <b>at least ONE level in the positive direction</b> , as in the following examples: <b>a.</b> A condition that is likely to be <b>fatal within six months</b> is expected to improve to a condition that is likely to be fatal within <b>six months to two years</b> or has an improved prognosis such as <b>a reduced life expectancy</b> . <b>b.</b> A condition that is likely to be fatal <b>within six months to two years</b> is expected to improve to a condition that has a <b>substantially reduced</b> life expectancy or better <b>c.</b> Patient facing a <b>substantially reduced</b> life expectancy is expected to improve to a condition in which the patient faces a <b>somewhat reduced</b> life expectancy or better. <b>d.</b> Patient facing a <b>somewhat reduced</b> life expectancy is expected to improve to a condition that is a <b>minimal threat</b> to life.
4. Major	The surgical procedure is expected to have an impact on the life expectancy of the patient such that the response to Item 6 would shift <b>at least TWO levels in the positive direction</b> , as in the following examples: <b>a.</b> A condition that is likely to be <b>fatal within six months</b> is expected to improve so that the patient has a <b>substantially reduced life expectancy or better</b> . <b>b.</b> A condition that is likely to be fatal <b>within six months to two years</b> is expected to improve to a condition that has a <b>somewhat reduced life expectancy or better</b> . <b>c.</b> Patient facing a <b>substantially reduced</b> life expectancy is expected to improve to a condition that is a <b>minimal threat</b> to life.