



# Altered Mental Status

## History

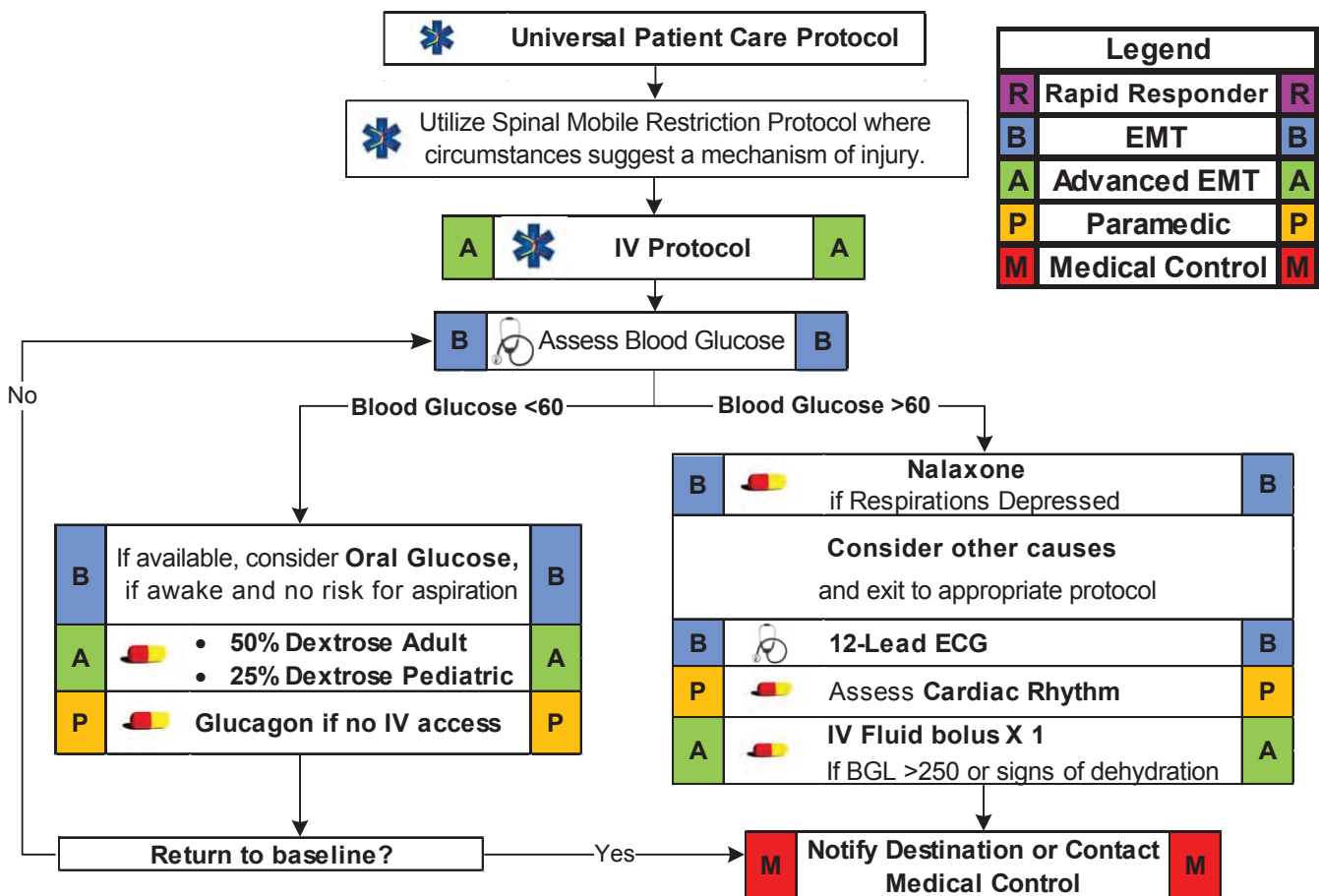
- Known diabetic, medic alert tag
- Drugs, drug paraphernalia
- Report of illicit drug use or toxic ingestion
- Past medical history
- Medications
- History of trauma
- Change in condition
- Changes in feeding or sleep habits

## Signs/Symptoms

- Decreased mental status or lethargy
- Change in baseline mental status
- Bizarre behavior
- Hypoglycemia (cool, diaphoretic skin)
- Hyperglycemia (warm, dry skin; fruity breath; Kussmaul resps; signs of dehydration)
- Irritability

## Differential

- Head trauma
- CNS (stroke, tumor, seizure, sepsis)
- Cardiac (MI, CHF)
- Hypothermia / Hyperthermia
- Infection (CNS and other)
- Thyroid (hyper / hypo)
- Shock (septic, metabolic, traumatic)
- Diabetes (hyper / hypoglycemia)
- Toxicologic or Ingestion
- Acidosis / Alkalosis
- Environmental exposure
- Pulmonary (Hypoxia)
- Electrolyte abnormality
- Psychiatric disorder





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## Pearls

- **Recommended Exam: Mental Status, HEENT, Skin, Heart, Lungs, Abdomen, Back, Extremities, Neuro.**  
**Pay careful attention to the head exam for signs of bruising or other injury.**
- Be aware of AMS as presenting sign of an environmental toxin or Haz-Mat exposure and protect personal safety.
- It is safer to assume hypoglycemia than hyperglycemia if doubt exists. Recheck blood glucose after Dextrose or Glucagon.
- Do not let alcohol confuse the clinical picture. Alcoholics frequently develop hypoglycemia and may have unrecognized injuries.
- Low blood glucose ( $< 60$ ), normal blood glucose (60 - 120), high blood glucose ( $> 250$ ).
- Consider Restraints if necessary for patient's and/or personnel's protection per the restraint procedure.
- Naloxone may be given by EMTs or AEMTs by either auto-injector or nasal spray only per local medical control option.