



WARNING SIGNS FOLLOW-UP GUIDE

..... FOR HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONALS



BACKGROUND

These questions, tips, and red flags were created based on near-miss cases of patients who suffered severe maternal morbidity.

Many patients called in with symptoms but were met with reassurance that symptoms were typical of pregnancy or postpartum rather than follow up questions that would have identified severe illness to allow prompt treatment.



FOLLOW UP QUESTIONS

These follow up questions are suggested to evaluate when patients call with symptoms of concern.

- › Please tell me in your own words what is wrong.
- › Is this your first time calling about this?
- › How long has this been going on?
- › Is it getting better, staying the same, or getting worse?
- › On a scale of 1 to 10 (worst) how bad is _____? (pain/tiredness/symptoms of concern)
- › Are you able to perform your normal day-to-day activities and take care of yourself?
- › Are you able to eat, drink, urinate, pass gas, have bowel movements?
- › Can you explain how this is limiting you?
- › What prompted you to call?
- › Have you had this before?
- › Can you explain how you are feeling and how this is different from your baseline?
- › Are there any barriers to coming in today?



ACTION ITEMS

- › If the patient does not need assessment now, explain red flag warning signs when the patient should call back or come in for evaluation.
- › Express empathy and concern. Many patients reported feeling like a burden and not feeling heard and subsequently delayed calling and seeking care when symptoms worsened.
- › Keep track of a list of patients to reach back out to follow up on and encourage them to call back if not improving or getting worse.



RED FLAGS (should prompt in-person evaluation)

- › Patient reaching out multiple times with concerns.
- › A support person calling on behalf of the patient with concerns.
- › Patient requests to be seen.
- › Symptoms that are worsening over time.
- › Patient unable to perform activities of daily living (climbing stairs, showering, brushing teeth, holding baby, etc.)
- › Signs of severe dehydration: inability to urinate, inability to make tears, abrupt stopping of milk production.
- › Severe pain.