

**Table 14.**  
**Framework for Reporting Changes in Vital Signs or Laboratory Values to a Practitioner**

>greater than, <less than

| Acute Sign/Laboratory Test                                    | Report Immediately   | Report on Next Office Day  |
|---|--|--|
| Vital Signs   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Systolic BP &gt;210 mmHg, &lt;90 mmHg</li> <li>Diastolic BP &gt;115 mmHg</li> <li>Resting pulse &gt;130 bpm, &lt;55* bpm, or &gt;110 bpm and patient has dyspnea or palpitations</li> <li>Respirations &gt;28, &lt;10*/minute</li> <li>Oral (electronic thermometer) temperature &gt;101°F</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Diastolic BP routinely &gt; 90 mmHg</li> <li>Resting pulse &gt; 120 bpm on repeat exam</li> </ul>   |
| Weight loss   |  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>New onset of anorexia with or without weight loss</li> <li>5% or more within 30 days</li> <li>10% or more within 6 months</li> </ul>  |
| Complete blood count  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>WBC &gt;12,000*</li> <li>Hemoglobin (Hb) &lt;8*</li> <li>Hematocrit &lt; 24*</li> <li>Platelets &lt; 50,000*</li> </ul>   | WBC > 10,000 without symptoms or fever   |
| Chemistry   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Blood/urea/nitrogen (BUN) &gt;60 mg/dL*</li> <li>Calcium (Ca) &gt;12.5 mg/dL</li> <li>Potassium (K) &lt;3.0, &gt;6.0 mg/dL</li> <li>Sodium (Na) &lt;125, &gt;155 mg/dL</li> <li>Blood glucose <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt;300 mg/dL in diabetic patient not using sliding-scale insulin</li> <li>&gt;430 mg/dL (or machine registers high) in diabetic patient using sliding-scale insulin</li> <li>&lt;70 mg/dL in diabetic patient</li> <li>&lt;50 mg/dL in nondiabetic patient</li> </ul> </li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Glucose consistently &gt;200 mg/dL</li> <li>Hb A1c (any value)</li> <li>Albumin (any value)</li> <li>Bilirubin (any value)</li> <li>Cholesterol (any value)</li> <li>Triglycerides (any value)</li> <li>Other chemistry values</li> </ul> |
| Drug levels   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Levels <i>above</i> therapeutic range of <i>any</i> drug (hold next dose)</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Any therapeutic or low level, unless resident shows evidence of possible adverse drug reaction despite therapeutic or low result</li> </ul>   |
| Prothrombin time (PT)<br>International normalized ratio (INR) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>INR &gt;6 IUs (hold warfarin)</li> <li>PT (in seconds) 3x control (hold warfarin)</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>INR 3-6 IUs (hold warfarin)</li> <li>PT (in seconds) 2x control (hold warfarin)</li> </ul>  |
| Urinalysis  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Abnormal result in patient with signs and symptoms possibly related to urinary tract infection or urosepsis (e.g., fever, burning sensation, pain, altered mental status)</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Abnormal result in patient with no signs or symptoms</li> </ul>   |
| Urine culture   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt;100,000 colony count with symptoms</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Any colony count, no symptoms</li> </ul>  |
| X-ray   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>New or unsuspected finding (e.g., fracture, pneumonia, CHF)</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Old or long-standing finding, no change</li> </ul>  |

\*Unless values are consistently at this level and practitioner is aware of this.

Adapted from Texas Nurses Association. Used with permission.