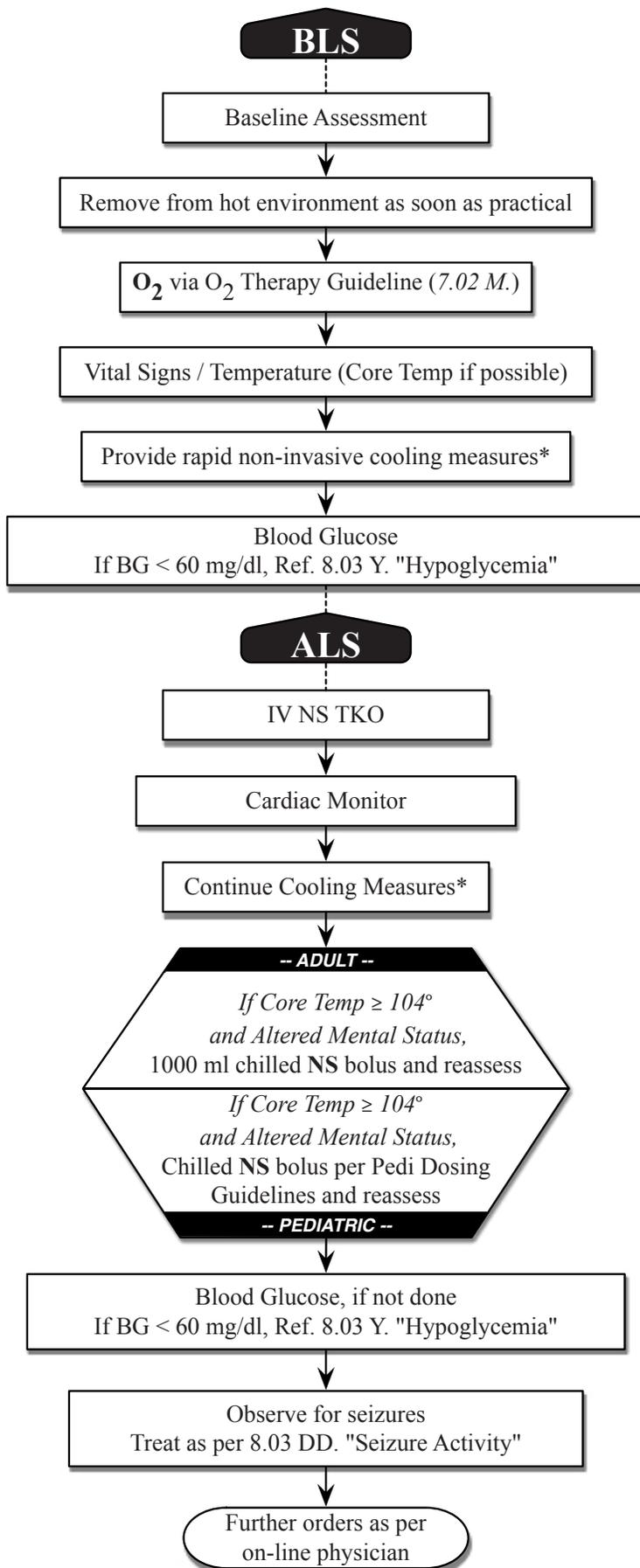


8.03 X. Hyperthermia (Environmental / Heat Stroke)



Environmental Hyperthermia

Hyperthermia is a condition related to the body's inability to cool itself adequately. Hormones, certain drugs or toxins can cause failure of thermoregulatory mechanisms with or without elevated environmental temperatures.

Hyperthermia is more commonly associated with exposure to high-heat, high-humidity situations where individuals are unable to cool themselves adequately. This may be exacerbated by inadequate physical fitness, hydration status, co-morbid illness or extremes of age.

Historically, environmental heat-related illness has been divided into multiple conditions such as prickly heat, heat cramps, heat exhaustion, and heat stroke. This division has been artificial and has occasionally resulted in inadequate treatments since the symptoms associated with each illness are variable and have a great deal of overlap. The discussion regarding environmental heat-related illness is better understood as a continuum with heat stroke as the most severe form, identified as altered mental status from an elevated body temperature.

** The preferred rapid cooling measure is to strip the patient down to undergarments, sponge or pour room temperature water on the skin while providing gently moving air (fanning). Do not cause the patient to develop "goose bumps" or shivering by over cooling the patient.*

**Ice packs may be placed in the groin and axilla.*

**Aggressive cooling should be stopped once the patient's core temp reaches ≤ 102° to avoid overshoot hypothermia.*

Hold all oral fluids until patient is alert and oriented, and has no complaints of nausea / vomiting.

Consider Sepsis 8.03 EE when hyperthermic but in the absence of environmental causes.