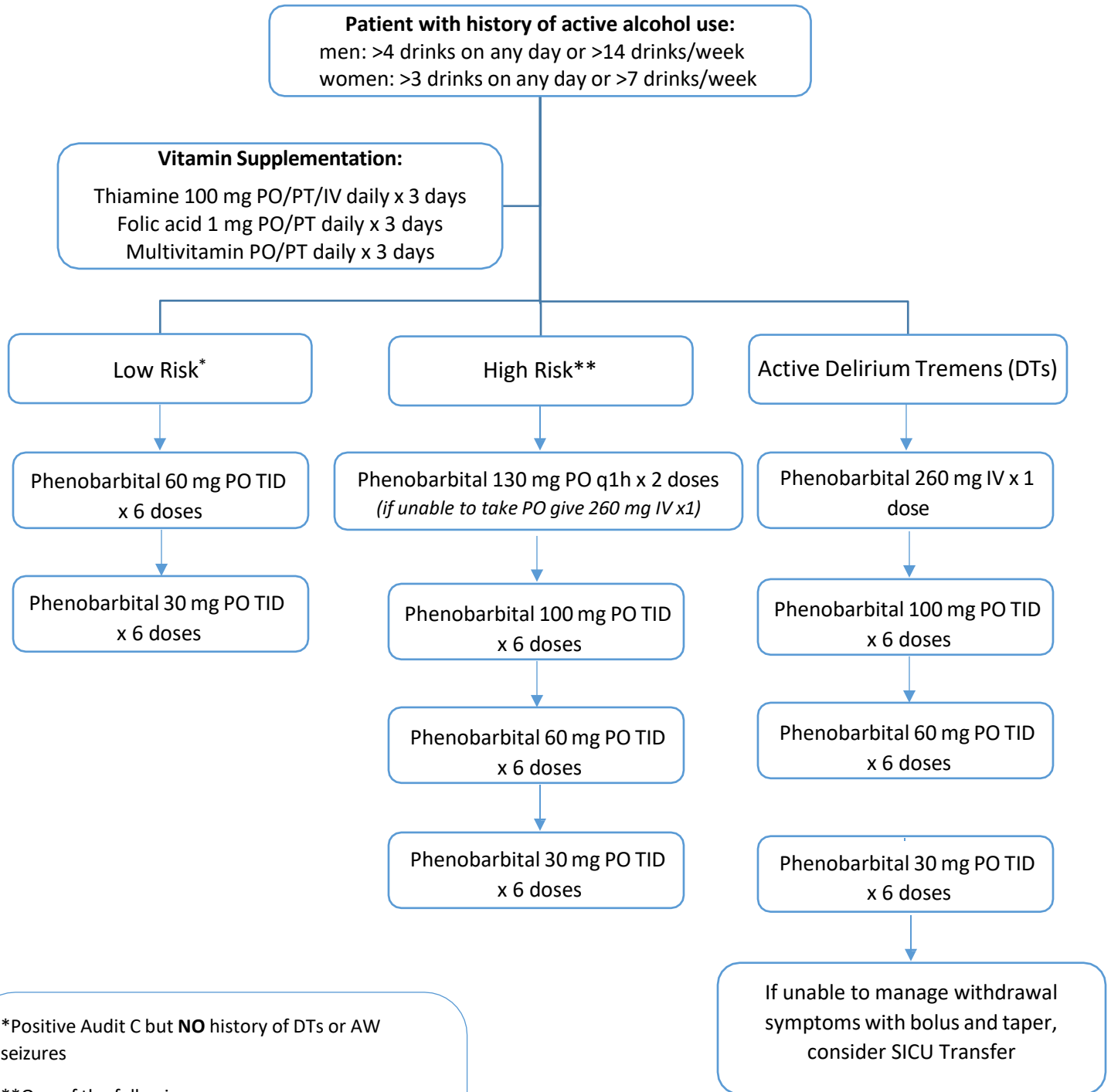


EMERGENCY
GENERAL SURGERY

Practice Management Guidelines: Alcohol Withdrawal Prevention



*Positive Audit C but **NO** history of DTs or AW seizures

**One of the following:

- History of alcohol withdrawal seizures
- History of DTs
- BAC >200
- BAC >100 plus alcohol withdrawal symptoms

Alcohol Withdrawal:

- For INTUBATED patients, if receiving a propofol or midazolam infusion, **NO ADDITIONAL** therapy required while on these infusions.
- EXCLUDED patients: On essential medications that interact with phenobarbital (e.g. HIV meds), hepatic encephalopathy, on phenobarbital chronically, pregnant.

Additional Information

- PO dosing preferred unless acute symptom management required, lack of enteral access, or patient unable to swallow safely. PO:IV conversion is 1:1.
- Breakthrough withdrawal symptoms despite maintenance regimen: phenobarbital 65 mg IV q1h prn to goal RASS 0 to -1.
- Hold dose if RASS \leq -2 or RR \leq 12 and notify provider.
- Avoid benzodiazepines

Dose Considerations

- **Soft max cumulative dose: 20 mg/kg (IBW); max cumulative dose: 30 mg/kg (IBW)**
 - **Patients with IBW <70 kg may need alterations to taper to ensure they do not exceed dose limit.**
- If agitation/delirium persists after a total cumulative phenobarbital dose of 20 mg/kg, consider other diagnoses and give additional phenobarbital doses cautiously. **Consult Addiction Psych.**
- If agitation/delirium persists after a total cumulative phenobarbital dose of 30 mg/kg do not give further phenobarbital.

Alcohol Withdrawal Presentation

- **Signs and symptoms of alcohol withdrawal**

Nausea/vomiting

Tremor

Paroxysmal sweats

Tachycardia (> 100 BPM) and hypertension

Anxiety/agitation

Visual, tactile, or auditory disturbances

Clouded sensorium

Seizures

- The above symptoms of withdrawal may present within 6-48 hours after cessation of alcohol and may progress to DTs if untreated.
- **Active Delirium Tremens**
 - DTs consist of alcohol withdrawal symptoms **AND** acute delirium
 - 5% of patients will develop DTs. This typically presents 48-72 hours after the last drink but has been reported up to 96 hours later.
 - Symptoms of DTs include tachycardia, hypertension, fevers, increased respiratory rate/respiratory alkalosis, visual/auditory hallucinations, and marked agitation. These symptoms may last up to 5 days. The untreated mortality rate may be up to 15%, largely due to the risk of aspiration. As a result, the need for a secure airway should be discussed in patients experiencing DTs.

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March 2026

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