PrimeWest Health Best Practice Guidelines For: Congestive Heart Failure (CHF)

Symptoms or Signs of New or Worsening CHF
- Unrelieved shortness of breath or new shortness of breath at rest
- Unrelieved or new chest pain
- Wheezing or chest tightness at rest
- Inability to sleep without sitting up
- Inability to stand without severe dizziness or light headedness
- Weight gain of >5 lbs. in 3 days
- Markedly increased edema

Take Vital Signs
- Temperature
- Blood pressure (BP)
- Apical heart rate
- Respirations
- Oxygen saturation
- For those with diabetes: Finger stick glucose

Vital Sign Criteria
- Temp >100.5° F (>38.05° C)?
- Apical heart rate >100 or <50?
- Respiratory rate >28/min?
- BP <90 systolic?
- Oxygen saturation <90%?
- For those with diabetes: Finger stick glucose >400 or <70?

Notify MD/NP/PA

Consider Lab Testing
- Portable chest X-ray
- Blood work:
  - Complete blood count
  - Basic metabolic panel
- EKG (if available)

Manage in Facility – Options
- Monitor vital signs every 4 – 8 hours for 24 – 72 hours (BP and apical heart rate)
- Oxygen supplementation as indicated
- Initiate or increase diuretic dose if indicated
  - Monitor electrolytes and kidney function
- Initiate or modify other cardiovascular medications if indicated

Consider Transfer to Acute Care Facility

Evaluate
- Results of chest X-ray suggestive of CHF or pneumonia?
- Critical values in blood count or metabolic panel?
- EKG shows new changes suggestive of an acute myocardial infarction (MI) or arrhythmia?