Patient arrives with pain in bone, joint or muscle, spine and/or refusal to walk, weight bear or use limb

Evaluation by treating provider (See Clinical Assessment.)

History and Clinical Evaluation Considered High Risk for MSK Infection

Order appropriate 2-view plain films of area, CBC, ESR, CRP, blood culture, NPO and PIV

- Discuss with Orthopedics
- MRI or other advanced imaging if indicated after discussion with Orthopedics

Does patient have decreased use/pain of extremity or spine and/or inability to bear weight AND at least one of the following:
1. Positive blood culture
2. And/or abnormal plain films
3. And/or abnormal labs
   - Abnormal white blood cell count (>12K)
   - Abnormal ESR (>40)
   - CRP (>2 mg/dL)
4. And/or fever >38.5ºC

YES

NO

Can patient be safely discharged to home?

YES

NO

Does patient have reliable follow up?

YES

NO

Can patient take oral fluids and pain?

YES

NO

Surgical drainage and/or irrigation may be indicated. Proceed to inpatient algorithm while awaiting admission/OR

Medical Management:
Admit to Hospitalist
Consider Orthopedics
Consider ID consult
Withhold antibiotics until seen by Orthopedics/ID
Pain control and anti-inflammatory

Manage Off Pathway

YES

NO

Proceed to inpatient algorithm for medical management while awaiting admission

Discharge to home with PCP follow-up or an orthopedic consult in the morning

Disclaimer: Pathways are intended as a guide for practitioners and do not indicate an exclusive course of treatment nor serve as a standard of medical care. These pathways should be adapted by medical providers, when indicated, based on their professional judgement and taking into account individual patient and family circumstances.

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