Red Flags for Potential Serious Conditions in Patients with Knee, Leg, Ankle or Foot Problems

Medical Screening for the Knee, Leg, Ankle or Foot Region		
Condition	**Red Flag Data obtained during Interview/History**	**Red Flag Data obtained during Physical Exam**
Fractures[1-4]	History of recent trauma: crush injury, MVA, falls from heights, or sports injuries Osteoporosis in the elderly	Joint effusion and hemarthorsis Bruising, swelling, throbbing pain, and point tenderness over involved tissues Unwillingness to bear weight on involved leg
Peripheral Arterial Occlusive Disease[5-9]	Age > 55 years old History of type II diabetes History of ischemic heart disease Smoking history Sedentary lifestyle Co-occurring intermittent claudication	Unilaterally cool extremity (may be bilateral if aorta is site of occlusion) Prolonged capillary refill time (>2 sec) Decreased pulses in arteries below the level of the occlusion Prolonged vascular filling time Ankle Brachial index < 0.90
Deep Vein Thrombosis[10,11,17]	Recent surgery, malignancy, pregnancy, trauma, or leg immobilization	Calf pain, edema, tenderness, warmth Calf pain that is intensified with standing or walking and relieved by rest and elevation Possible pallor and loss of dorsalis pedis pulse
Compartment Syndrome[12-14]	History of blunt trauma, crush injury - or - Recent participation in a rigorous, unaccustomed exercise or training activity	Severe, persistent leg pain that is intensified with stretch applied to involved muscles Swelling, exquisite tenderness and palpable tension/hardness of involved compartment Paresthesia, paresis, and pulselessness
Septic Arthritis[15]	History of recent infection, surgery, or injection Coexisting immunosuppressive disorder	Constant aching and/or throbbing pain, joint swelling, tenderness, warmth May have an elevated body temperature
Cellulitis[16]	History of recent skin ulceration or abrasion, venous insufficiency, CHF, or cirrhosis History of diabetes mellitus	Pain, skin swelling, warmth and an advancing, irregular margin of erythema/reddish streaks Fever, chills, malaise and weakness

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