

INFECTIONS/ INFLAMMATION	CARDIAC/ISCHEMIC/ BLEEDING	METABOLIC/ HEMATOLOGIC/ ENVIRONMENTAL
Spinal epidural abscess	Aortic dissection Leaking/ruptured abdominal aortic aneurysm	Diabetes ketoacidosis Hyperosmolar hyperglycemia
Necrotizing fasciitis	Pericardial tamponade	Myxedema/ thyrotoxicosis
Meningitis	Wolff-Parkinson-White Prolonged QT	Addison's disease
Endocarditis	Pulmonary embolism	B ₁₂ deficiency anemia
Peritonsillar abscess	Tension pneumothorax	von Willebrand's disease
Tuberculosis-active pulmonary, other	Acute mesenteric ischemia Sigmoid volvulus	Hemochromatosis
COVID-19 infection	Esophageal, bowel perforation	Celiac sprue
Guillain-Barré syndrome	Cerebellar hemorrhage	Carbon monoxide poisoning
Ebola infection	Spinal cord compression	Food poisoning
Temporal arteritis	Testicular, ovarian torsion	Malignant hyperthermia
Rhabdomyolysis	Ectopic pregnancy	Alcohol, benzodiazepine, barbiturate withdrawal
Angioedema	Retroperitoneal hemorrhage	Tumor lysis syndrome Hypo-/hypercalcemia

An important related concept is so-called “red flags” or “alarm symptoms.” This construct has its origins in guidelines for back pain but has increasingly been applied to many other problems, such as headache, red eye, swollen joint, or even abdominal pain and chest pain. Examples of widely cited red flags for back pain that should trigger consideration of more serious etiologies include fever, weight