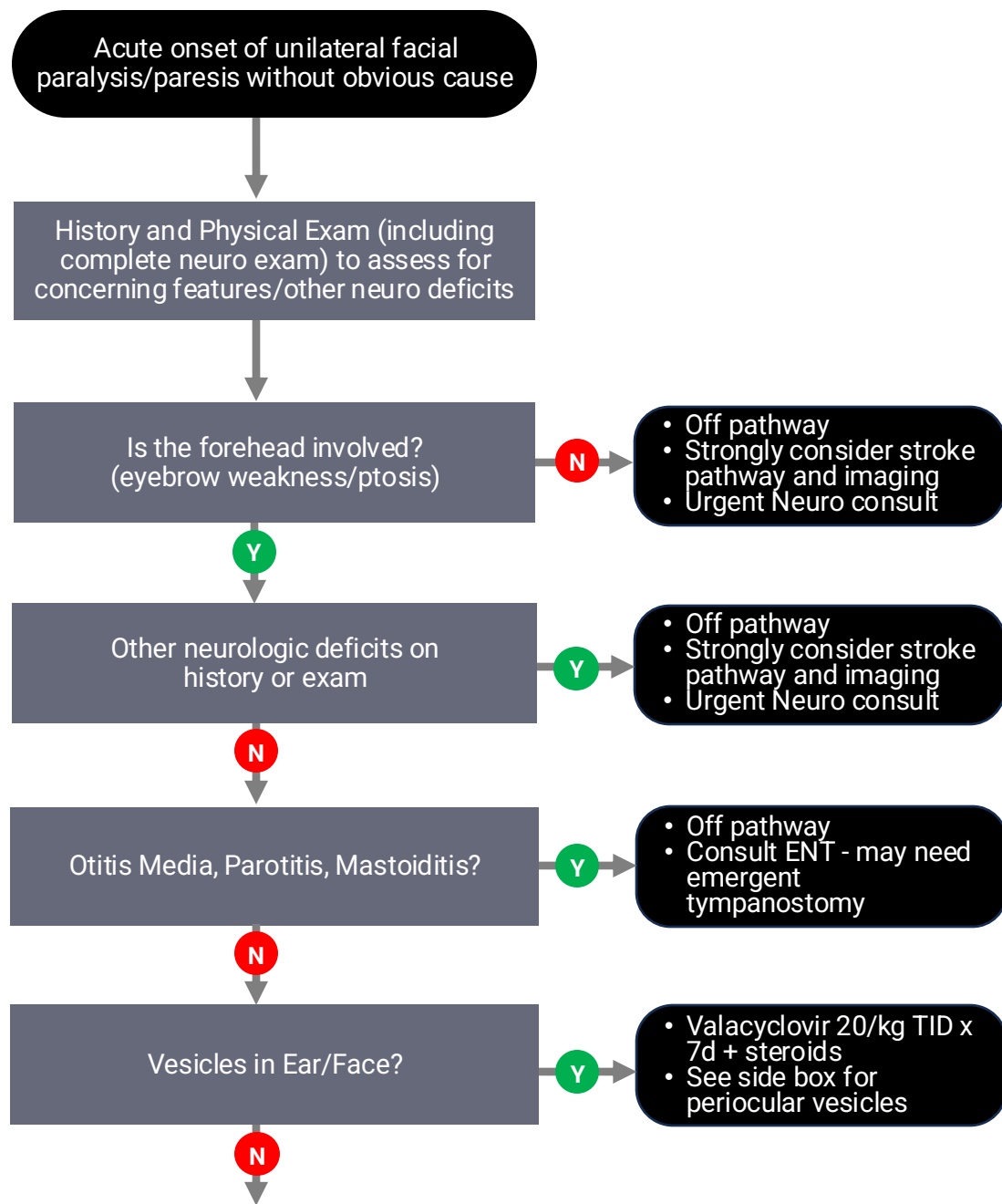


Facial Nerve Palsy

Emergency Department / Urgent Care



Treat as Bell's Palsy

Testing

- Send Lyme testing (Total Lyme with reflex; treat if positive – see side box)
- Eye exam if indicated (side box)

Treatment

Steroids

- Prednisone/prednisolone - 2mg/kg/day (max 80 mg) x 5 days plus 5 day taper. Standard of care in adults; recommended in children especially within 3 days of onset

+/- Valacyclovir

- No consensus, consider for severe symptoms or early presentation
- 20mg/kg/dose TID (max 1g) x 7d

Eye care – everyone

- Order patch for overnight use
- Artificial tears q4 hours awake (q1 prn)
- "Soothe ointment" at bedtime before patching

Follow-up

- PCP – 2 days to assure eye care going well, no new symptoms
- Ophtho - 3-4 weeks (everyone); earlier for findings on fluorescein exam
- ENT - 3-4 weeks (everyone – education and hearing eval for all)
- Neuro – not necessary for uncomplicated Bell's palsy

Concerning features

- Onset gradual (consider cholesteatoma)
- Systemic symptoms
- < 2 years old
- History of trauma
- Other neurologic symptoms/CN weaknesses
- Fever
- Travel history (TB)
- Headache, stiff neck
- Recurrent Bell's palsy (Neuro consult and MRI with/without contrast)

Central vs peripheral nerve palsy

- Central lesion (concern for stroke) **spar**es the forehead, so the forehead moves normally
- Peripheral lesion (possible Bell's palsy) **inv**olves forehead, so the forehead/eyebrow movement is weak

Bell's Palsy



Courtesy: rcemlearning.co.uk

Eye evaluation in ED

- Fluorescein exam** for: foreign body sensation, irritation, tearing, or vesicles in the periocular area
- Ophtho consult** in ED required for: epithelial defect, irregular surface, haze, abrasion over pupil; strongly consider ophtho consult for periocular vesicles to assure no corneal HSV/VZV

Eye patching

Instruct families to:

- Use at bedtime
- Apply prescribed soothe ointment
- Gently hold eye closed with fingers to assure its completely shut
- Hold patch over eye & tape to skin
- Patch is available in service center



Lyme disease

- Test all patients with Bells' palsy as tick bites are not always recognized
- If positive, do not prescribe steroids
- Results appear at Burnet in 1 hour; please message PVRN if sending from the UC or LT
- If positive treat with doxycycline 4.4 mg/kg/DAY divided bid (max 200mg/dose) X 14 days (all ages including <8yo)

Pathways guide care but are not intended to replace clinical judgement, nor capture all nuances of care.