

Disclaimer: This algorithm has been developed for MD Anderson using a multidisciplinary approach considering circumstances particular to MD Anderson's specific patient population, services and structure, and clinical information. This is not intended to replace the independent medical or professional judgment of physicians or other health care providers in the context of individual clinical circumstances to determine a patient's care. This algorithm should not be used to treat pregnant women.

Note: Consider Clinical Trials as treatment options for eligible patients.

PRESENTATION

EVALUATION

DIAGNOSIS

RISK STATUS

TREATMENT/ EVALUATION

Signs and symptoms or neuro-axis imaging suggestive of leptomeningeal disease (LMD)

- Physical exam with comprehensive neurologic evaluation¹
- MRI brain and MRI cervical/thoracic/lumbar spine with and without contrast
- Cerebrospinal fluid (CSF) exam² for the following:
 - Cell count with differential, with pathologist review as applicable
 - Glucose
 - Protein
 - Cytopathology (10-12 mL)
 - Flow cytometry for lymphoma or hematologic malignancies
 - Opening pressure
- If indicated, consider:
 - Gram stain and culture
 - Cryptococcal antigen
 - Calcofluor white smear
 - Viral PCR (HSV, CMV, EBV)
 - Fungal and viral cultures
- Lifestyle risk assessment³
- Discuss Goal Concordant Care (GCC) with patient or if clinically indicated, with Patient Representative⁴

- CSF cytopathology positive for malignant cells **and/or**
- Radiographic imaging consistent with LMD and supportive neurologic signs/symptoms **and/or**
- Suggestive CSF⁵ findings with supportive neurologic findings in a patient with a known malignancy

Poor Risk⁶:

- Low Karnofsky performance status (KPS)⁷
- Major neurologic deficits
- Extensive systemic disease without reasonable treatment options
- Encephalopathy

Good Risk:

- High Karnofsky performance status (KPS)⁸
- No major neurologic deficits
- Minimal systemic disease
- Reasonable treatment options available for systemic disease (if applicable)

Consider fractionated external beam radiation therapy to symptomatic sites **and/or** best supportive care

See Page 2

¹ Mental status, cranial nerves, motor, sensory and cerebellar exam

² Use caution for lumbar punctures in patients who are anticoagulated, thrombocytopenic, or who have a bulky intracranial mass (refer to [Peri-Procedure Management of Anticoagulants](#) and [Adult Lumbar Puncture](#) algorithms)

³ See [Physical Activity](#), [Nutrition](#), and [Tobacco Cessation Treatment](#) algorithms; ongoing reassessment of lifestyle risks should be a part of routine clinical practice

⁴ GCC should be initiated by the Primary Oncologist. If Primary Oncologist is unavailable, Primary Team/Attending Physician to initiate GCC discussion and notify Primary Oncologist. Patients, or if clinically indicated, the Patient Representative should be informed of therapeutic and/or palliative options. GCC discussion should be consistent, timely, and re-evaluated as clinically indicated. The Advance Care Planning (ACP) note should be used to document GCC discussion. Refer to [GCC home page](#) (for internal use only).

⁵ In the appropriate clinical setting, CSF suggestive of LMD in the absence of positive cytology includes increased opening pressure, high WBC and/or low glucose and/or high protein. If CSF is not positive for tumor cells, up to three lumbar punctures may be of clinical value.

⁶ Poor risk patients that are highly sensitive to chemotherapy or targeted therapy may be treated

⁷ Refer to the Karnofsky Performance Status Scale (see [Appendix A](#)) – Score < 60 is considered a poor risk factor

⁸ Refer to the Karnofsky Performance Status Scale (see [Appendix A](#)) – Score ≥ 60 is considered a good risk factor

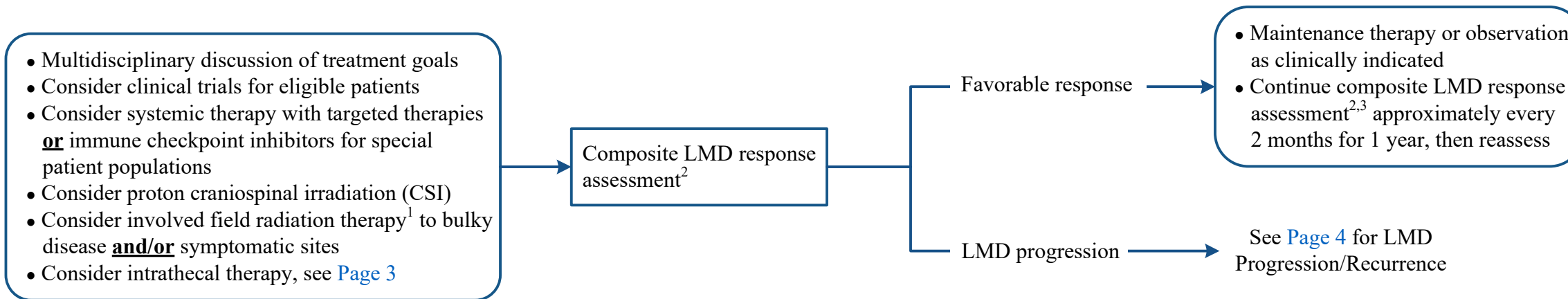
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TREATMENT

EVALUATION

FOLLOW UP TREATMENT/ SURVEILLANCE



¹ Typically whole brain radiation therapy (WBRT) and/or partial spine field recommended

² LMD treatment response is assessed using a composite of clinical evaluation, neuro-axis imaging, and CSF analysis

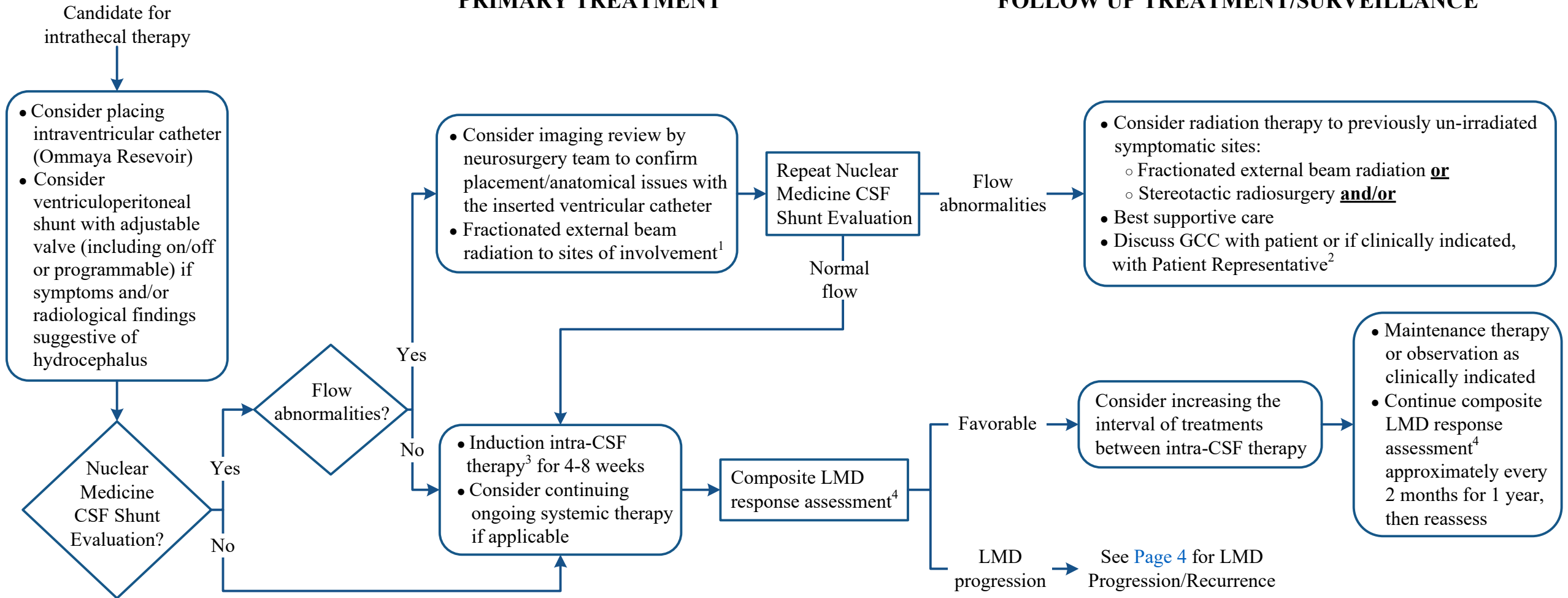
³ Consider deferring CSF assessment in patients not on intrathecal therapy

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PRIMARY TREATMENT

FOLLOW UP TREATMENT/SURVEILLANCE



¹ Usually whole brain radiation therapy (WBRT) and/or partial spine field recommended

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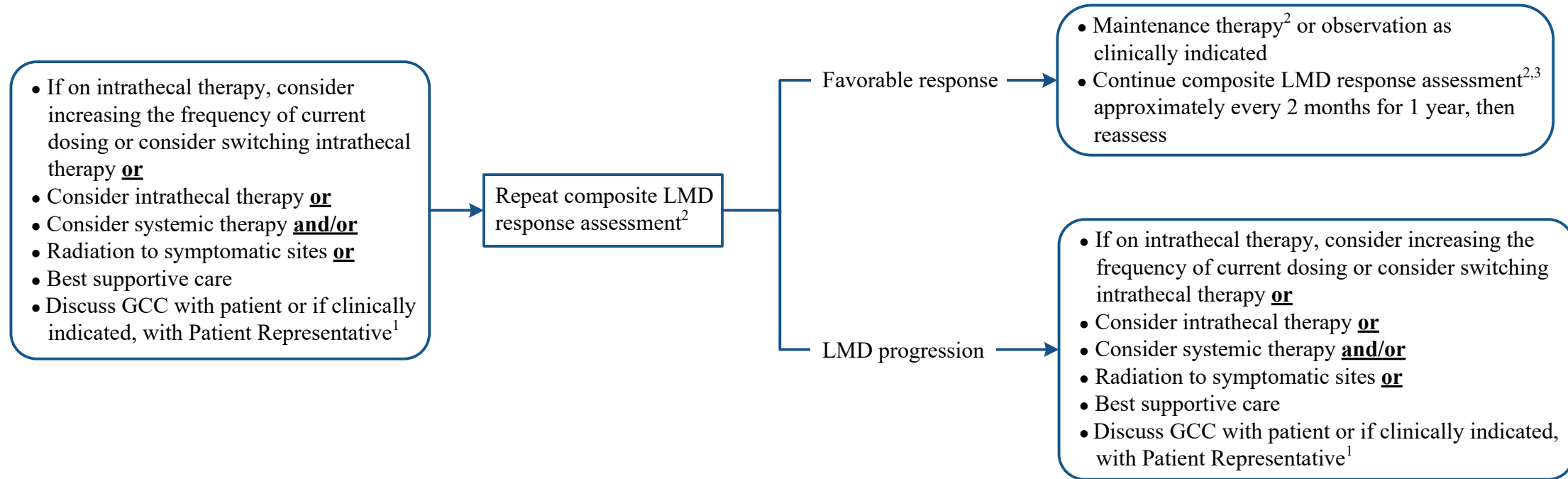
³ Induction intra-CSF chemotherapy can start after radiation

⁴ LMD treatment response is assessed using a composite of clinical evaluation, neuro-axis imaging, and CSF analysis

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LMD PROGRESSION/RECURRENCE



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APPENDIX A: Karnofsky Performance Status Scale Definitions

Able to carry on normal activity and to work; no special care needed	100	Normal; no complaints; no evidence of disease
	90	Able to carry on normal activity; minor signs or symptoms of disease
	80	Normal activity with effort; some signs of disease
Unable to work; able to live at home and care for most personal needs; varying amount of assistance needed	70	Cares for self; unable to carry on normal activity or to do active work
	60	Requires occasional assistance, but is able to care for most of his personal needs
	50	Requires considerable assistance and frequent medical care
Unable to care for self; requires equivalent of institutional or hospital care; disease may be progressing rapidly	40	Disabled; requires special care and assistance
	30	Severely disabled; hospital admission is indicated although death not imminent
	20	Very sick; hospital admission necessary; active supportive treatment necessary
	10	Moribund; fatal processes progressing rapidly
	0	Dead

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SUGGESTED READINGS

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DEVELOPMENT CREDITS

This practice algorithm is based on majority expert opinion of the Leptomeningeal Metastases providers at the University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center. It was developed using a multidisciplinary approach that included input from the following:

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