

10 Guidelines for Consultation

1. Always call in consults physician to physician.
2. The primary team should leave their pagers on into the evening to receive information from consultants.
3. The primary team should always ask consultants to answer a specific question.
4. The primary team for hospitalized patients should limit consults to inpatient issues.
5. The primary team should always perform a history and physical examination and order appropriate laboratory before calling the consultant (exception – emergency care).
6. The primary team should always follow consultants' recommendations or verbally communicate disagreements to the consulting service. The team should refer unresolved management issues to the attending physician.
7. The consulting physician should respond politely, see a consult within 24 hours, and involve the attending physician promptly.
8. The consultant should leave notes daily unless otherwise specified and leave a sign-off note addressing follow-up issues.
9. The consultant should avoid writing unnecessary orders and verbally communicate potential disagreements to the primary team. The consultant should refer unresolved management issues to the attending physician.
10. Consultants should consider establishing service-specific guidelines to facilitate more appropriate consultations.