

# The Dark Side of Immunotherapy

5 April 2017

Joel Gingerich, MD, FRCPC  
Medical Oncologist

Medical Director, Community Oncology Program  
Associate Program Medical Director, WRHA Oncology  
Program

CancerCare Manitoba  
Assistant Professor  
University of Manitoba

# Presenter Disclosure

- **Faculty:** Joel Gingerich
- **Relationships with commercial interests:**  
N/A

# Mitigating Potential Bias

- N/A

# Learning Objectives

- Identify common toxicities associated with immune checkpoint inhibitors
- Recognize and treat potentially life-threatening toxicities associated with immune checkpoint inhibitors

# “Chemotherapy” drug classes

## Chemotherapy<sup>t</sup>

5-fluorouracil  
Methotrexate  
Cisplatin  
Oxaliplatin  
Doxorubicin  
Irinotecan  
Doxetaxel

## Targeted therapy<sup>t</sup>

Bevacizumab  
Sunitinib  
Trastuzumab  
Cetuximab  
Imatinib  
Vemurafenib

## Immuno-oncology

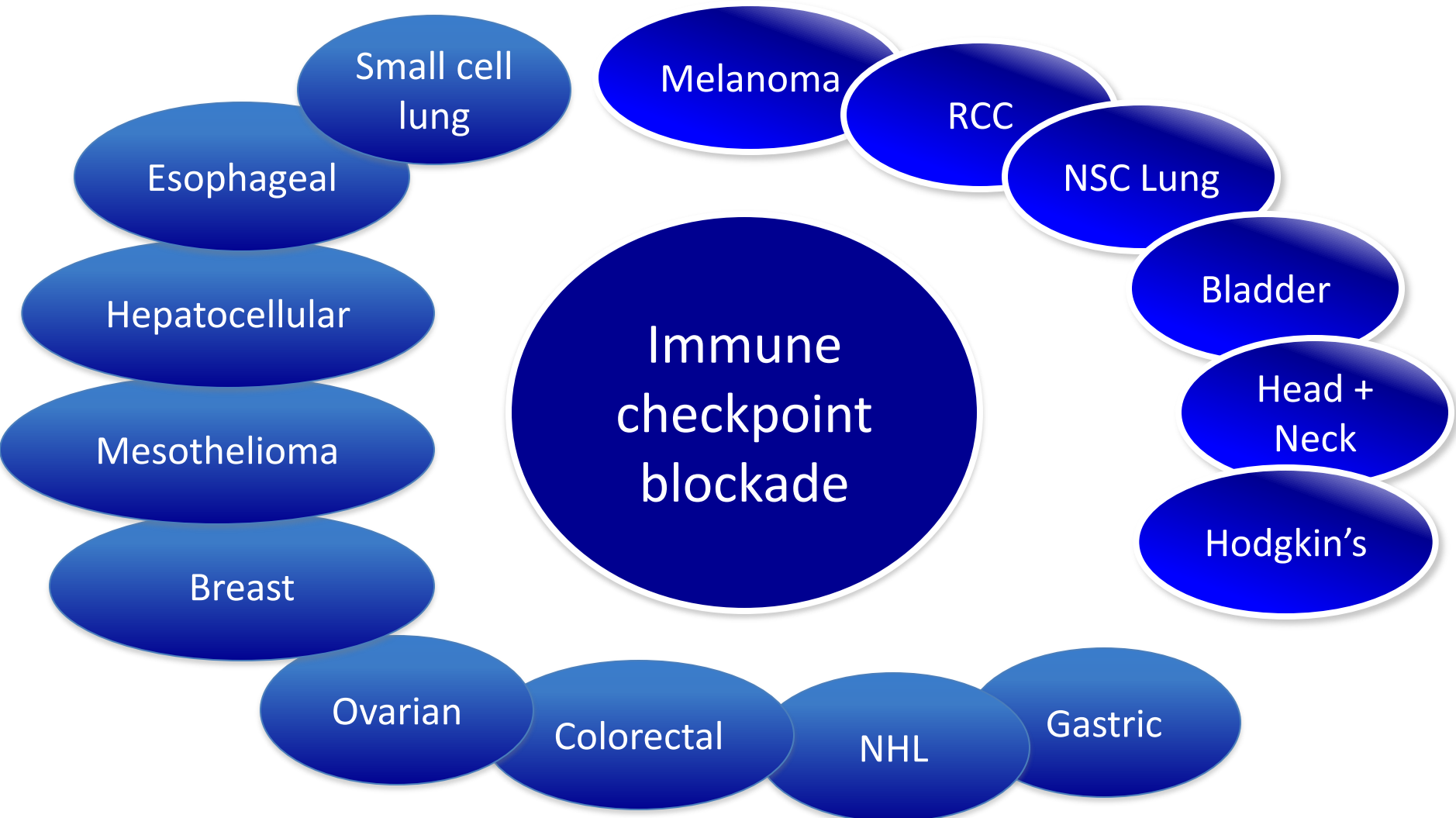
Immune checkpoint inhibitors

Different toxicities  
(can be fatal)

Different management strategies

<sup>t</sup> Selected agents shown

# Immune Checkpoint inhibitors are active in many types of cancers



# Approved immune checkpoint inhibitors as of 4/2017

## PD-1 inhibitors

- Pembrolizumab
- Nivolumab

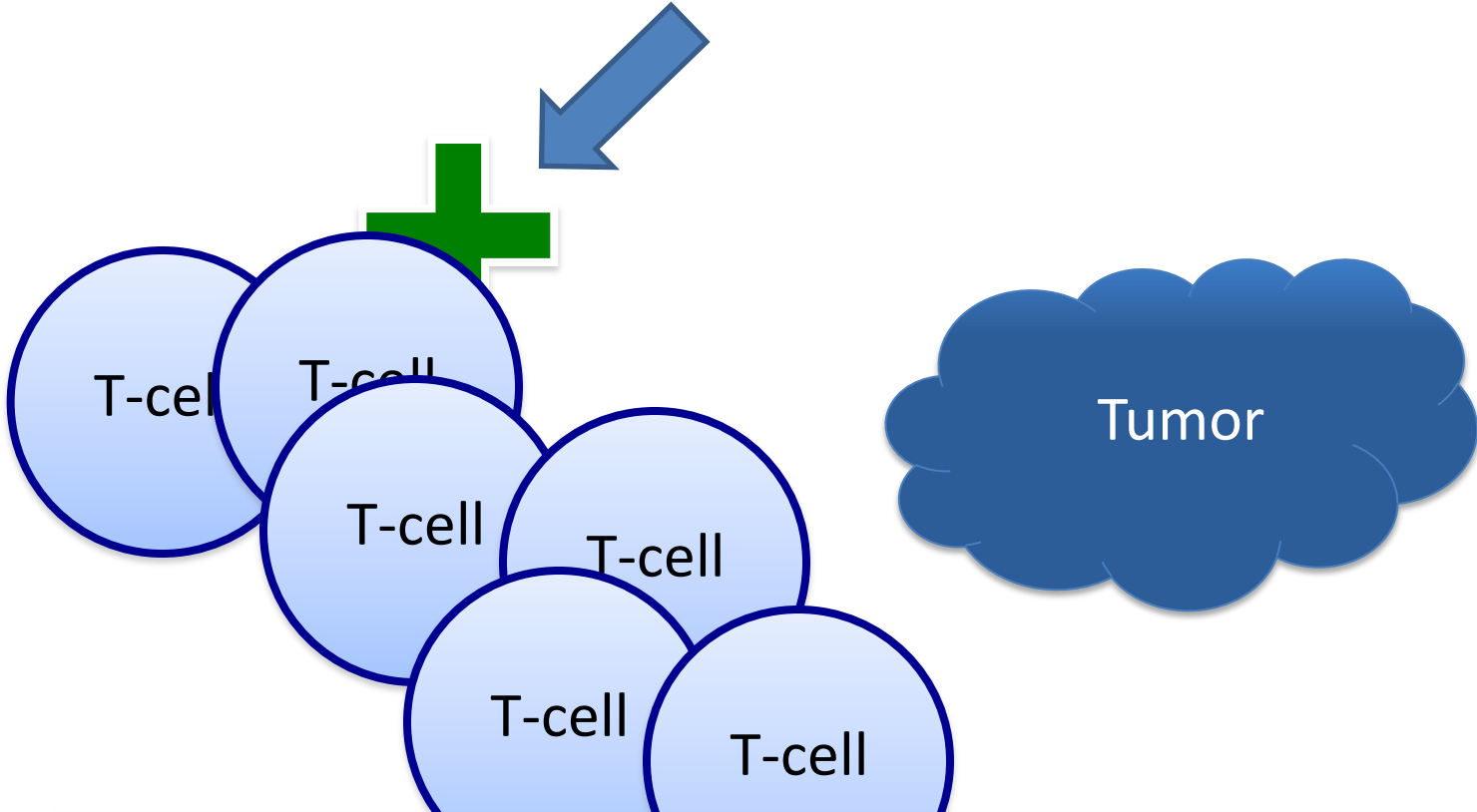
## PDL-1 inhibitors

- Atezolizumab
- Avelumab
- Durvalumab

## CTLA-4 inhibitor

- Ipilimumab

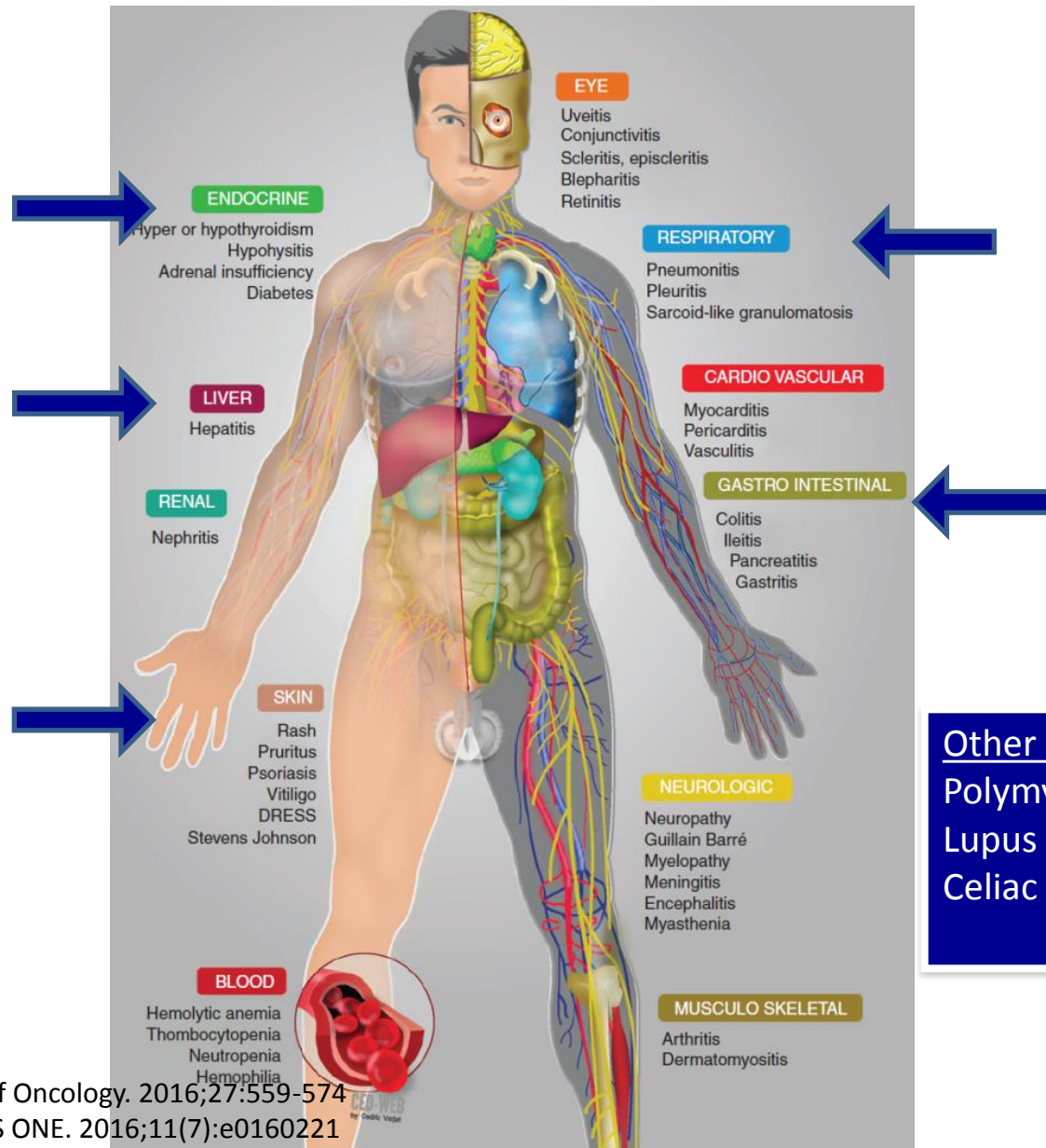
# Immune checkpoint inhibitors



↑ risk for immune related side effects



# Immune related adverse events (irAE)



Other reported toxicities:  
Polymyalgia rheumatica  
Lupus  
Celiac disease

# How common are irAE's: A meta-analysis

- Included randomized phase II/III trials between 1996-2016
- 21 trials
- N = 11,454

Toxicity	All Grade (%)	Grade 3-4 (%)
Colitis	2.3	1.5
Hepatotoxicity	6.5	1.5
Rash	13.9	1.1
Hypothyroidism	5.1	0.3
Pneumonitis	2.6	1.1


**Fatal irAE's occurred in 0.64% of patients**

# Cumulative incidence of AE's (selected phase III studies)

Class	Grade 3-4 (%)
PD-1/ PDL-1	10-19%
CTLA-4	20-27%
Combined treatment	55%

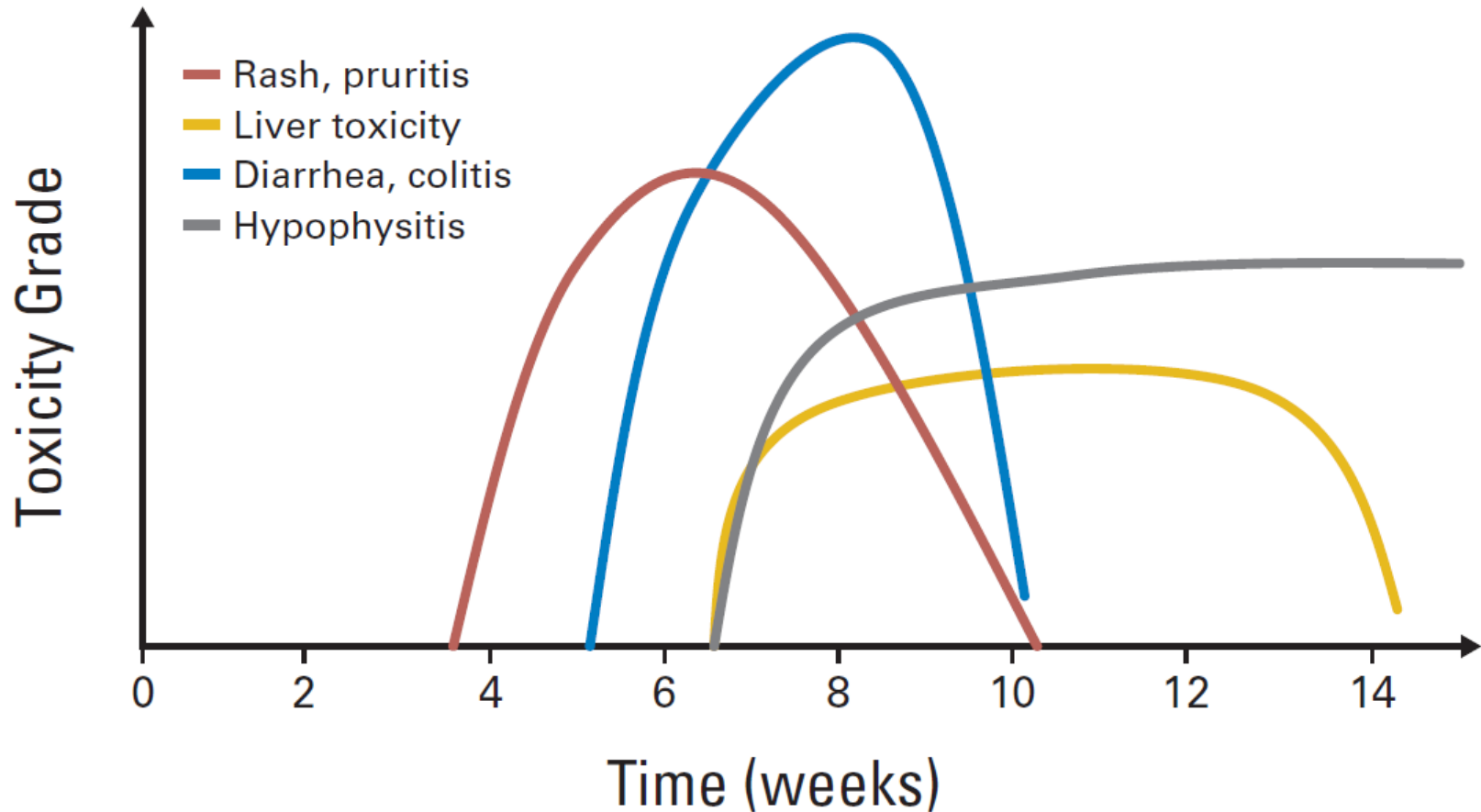
↑ Colon, liver, skin, endocrine, and lung toxicity vs. chemo

Rpbert C. et al: N Engl J Med. 2015;372(26):2521-2532  
Larkin J, et al: N Engl J Med. 2015;373(1):23-34  
Motzer RJ, et al: N Engl J Med. 2015;373(19):1803-1813  
Ferris RL, et al: N Engl J Med. 2016;375(19):1856-1867  
Bellmun J, et al: N Engl J Med. 2017;  
De Velasco G, et al: Cancer Immunol Res. 2017;5(4):213-21



More of us  
coming!

# When do irAE's occur?

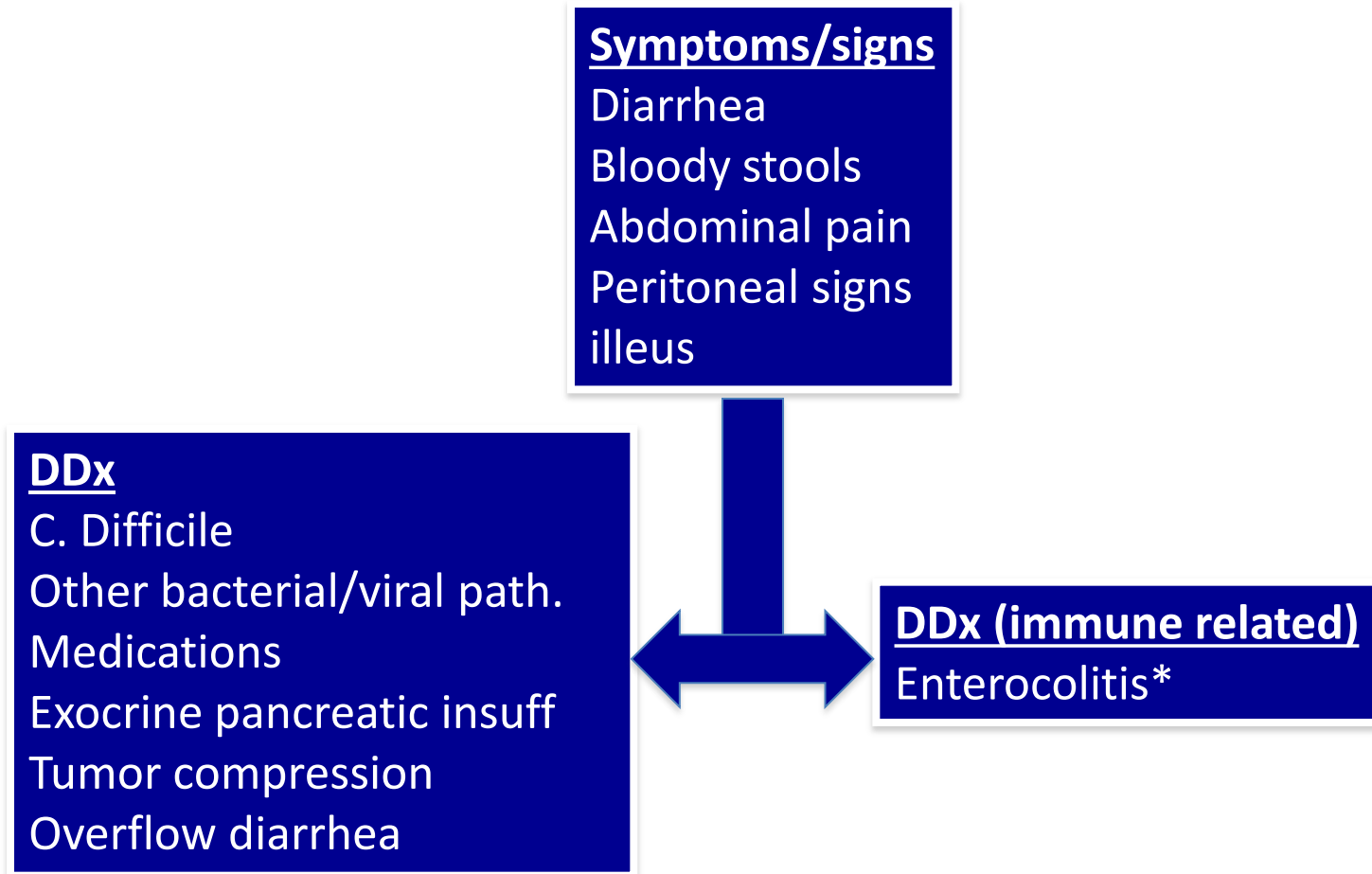


Can occur at anytime during or even after treatment ends

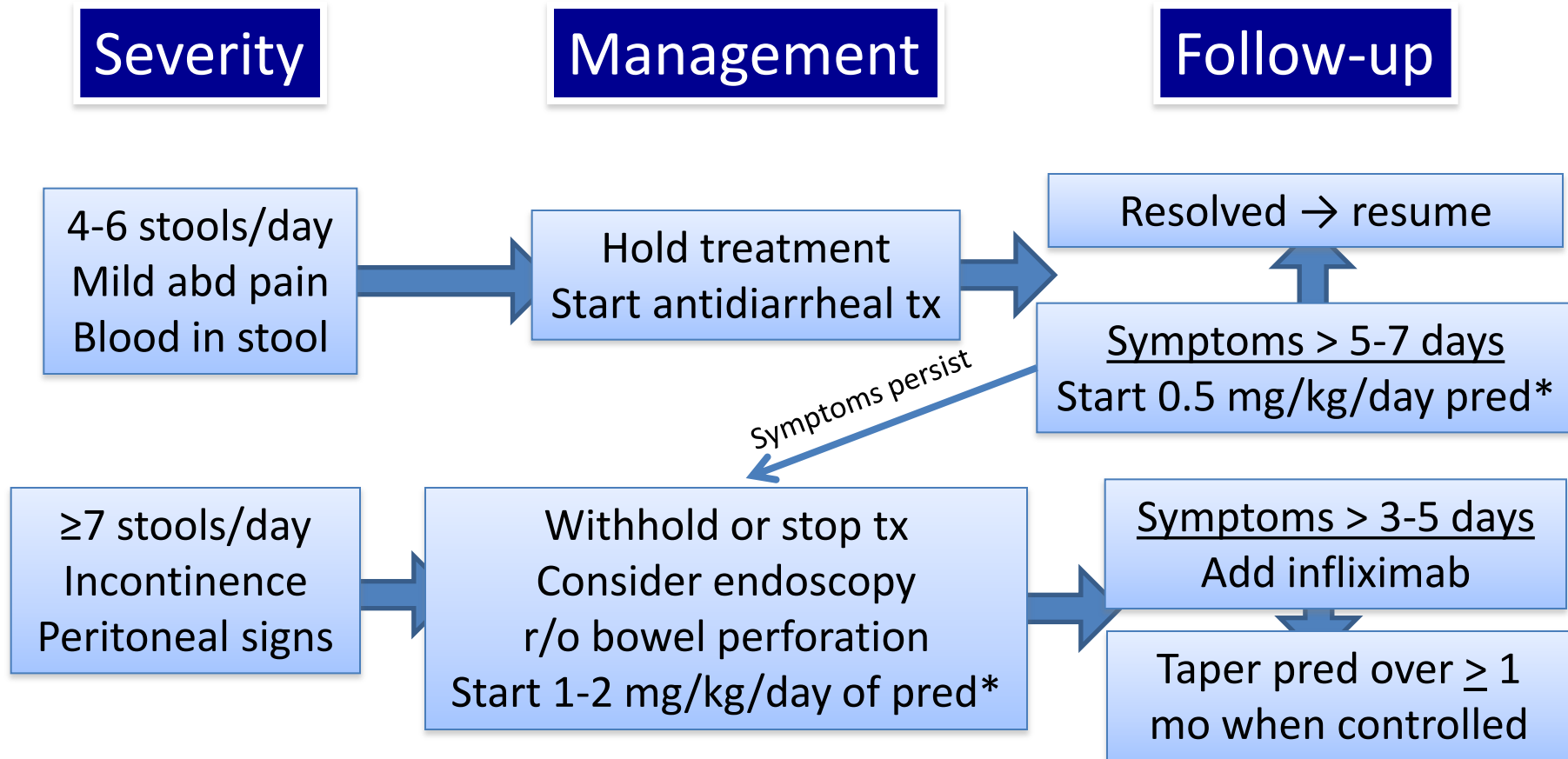
- 55 yo female with advanced melanoma presents to your clinic with a 3 day history of 4 loose BM's per day.
  - She has been on ipilimumab for 6 months.
  - She has not had any fevers or chills.
  - She recently completed a course of antibiotics for a UTI.



# irAE: Diarrhea/colitis



# Managing toxicity: Diarrhea



[http://www.accessdata.fda.gov/drugsatfda\\_docs/reams/Yervoy\\_2012-02-16\\_Full.pdf](http://www.accessdata.fda.gov/drugsatfda_docs/reams/Yervoy_2012-02-16_Full.pdf)

<http://www.opdivoyervoyhcp.com/servlet/servlet.FileDownload?file=00Pi00000SRPWFEAP>

Naidoo J, et al: Annals of Oncology. 2015;26:2375-2391

- 65 yo male presents to your urgent care clinic with a 2 day history of a mild erythematous maculo-papular rash.
  - He has mild pruritus
  - The rash involves 40% of his body
  - Blood work shows AST 4x ULN. TB = 1 x ULN
  - He is currently on nivolumab for metastatic kidney cancer (Initially diagnosed 4 years ago)





# irAE': Rash and pruritis

## Symptoms/signs

Rash  
Redness  
Itch  
Blisters/ ulcers  
Vitiligo

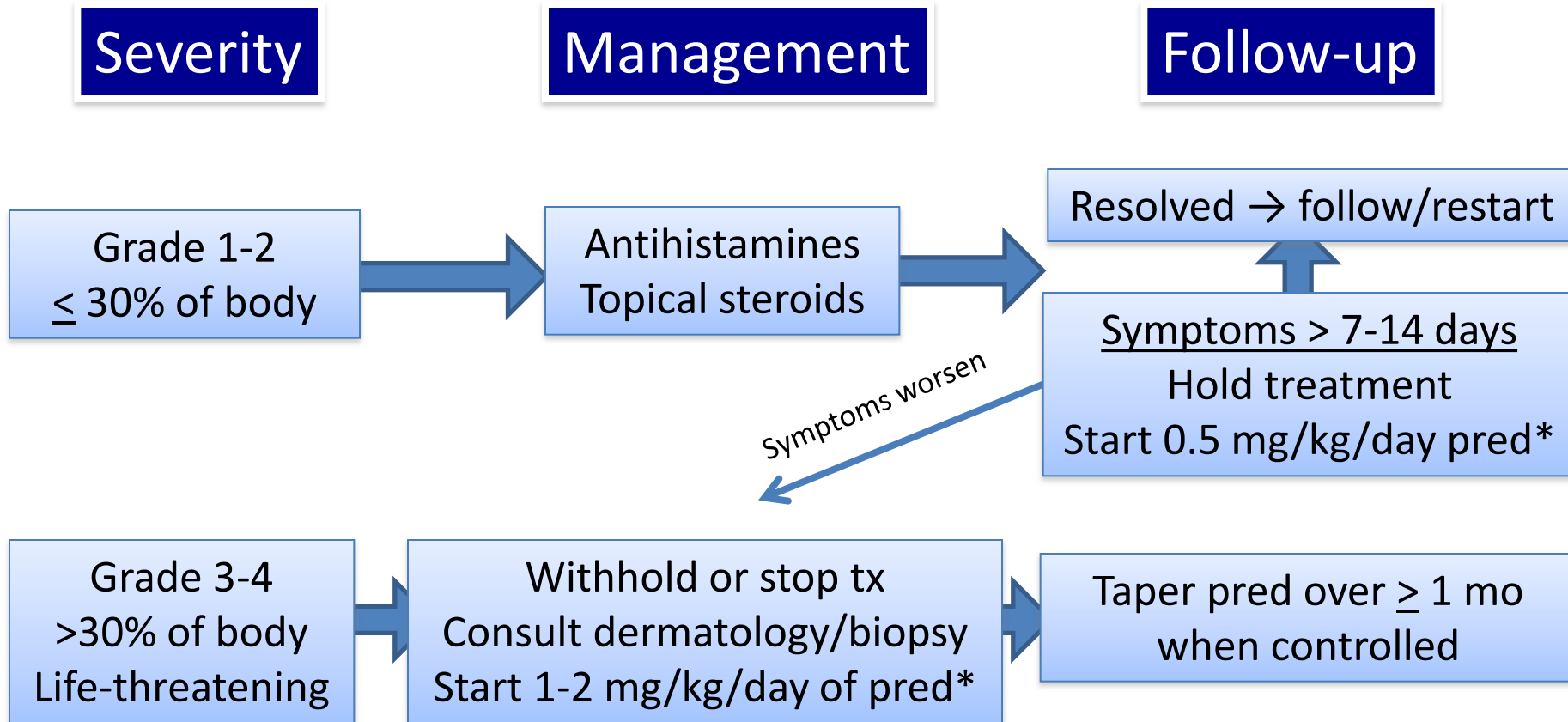
## DDx

Another drug  
Contact dermatitis  
Viral  
Acne  
Tinea versicolor  
Cholestasis  
Paraneoplastic

## DDx (immune related)

Immune-related rash\*

# Managing toxicity: Rash



[http://www.accessdata.fda.gov/drugsatfda\\_docs/reams/Yervoy\\_2012-02-16\\_Full.pdf](http://www.accessdata.fda.gov/drugsatfda_docs/reams/Yervoy_2012-02-16_Full.pdf)

<http://www.opdivoyervoyhcp.com/servlet/servlet.FileDownload?file=00Pi000000SRPWfEAP>

Naidoo J, et al: Annals of Oncology. 2015;26:2375-2391

# irAE: Liver

## Symptoms/signs/labs

Liver enzyme elevation\*

Fever

Jaundice

N/V

Right sided abdominal pain

## DDx

Liver metastasis

Medications

ETOH

Cholecystitis

Viral hepatitis

NAFLD

Genetic disorders

## DDx (immune related)

Hepatitis\*

# Managing toxicity: Liver

## Severity

## Management

## Follow-up

Grade 2  
AST/ALT  $>3 \leq 5x$  ULN  
TB  $> 1.5 \leq 3x$  ULN

Withhold tx  
0.5-1 mg/kg/day pred\*

Resolved  $\rightarrow$  restart

Taper pred over  $\geq 1$  mo  
when controlled

Symptoms worsen

Grade 3-4  
AST/ALT  $> 5x$  ULN  
TB  $> 3x$  ULN

stop tx  
Consult hepatology  
1-2 mg/kg/day of pred\*

Taper pred over  $\geq 1$  mo  
when controlled

- 60 yo female presents to the ER with new N/V, headache, mild confusion and vision changes.
  - She has metastatic bladder cancer and has been receiving nivolumab x 9 mo



# irAE: Endocrine

## Symptoms/signs/labs

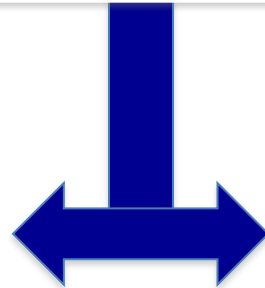
Fatigue  
Headache  
Mental status changes  
Vision changes  
Hypotension  
↑ K, ↓ Na

## DDx

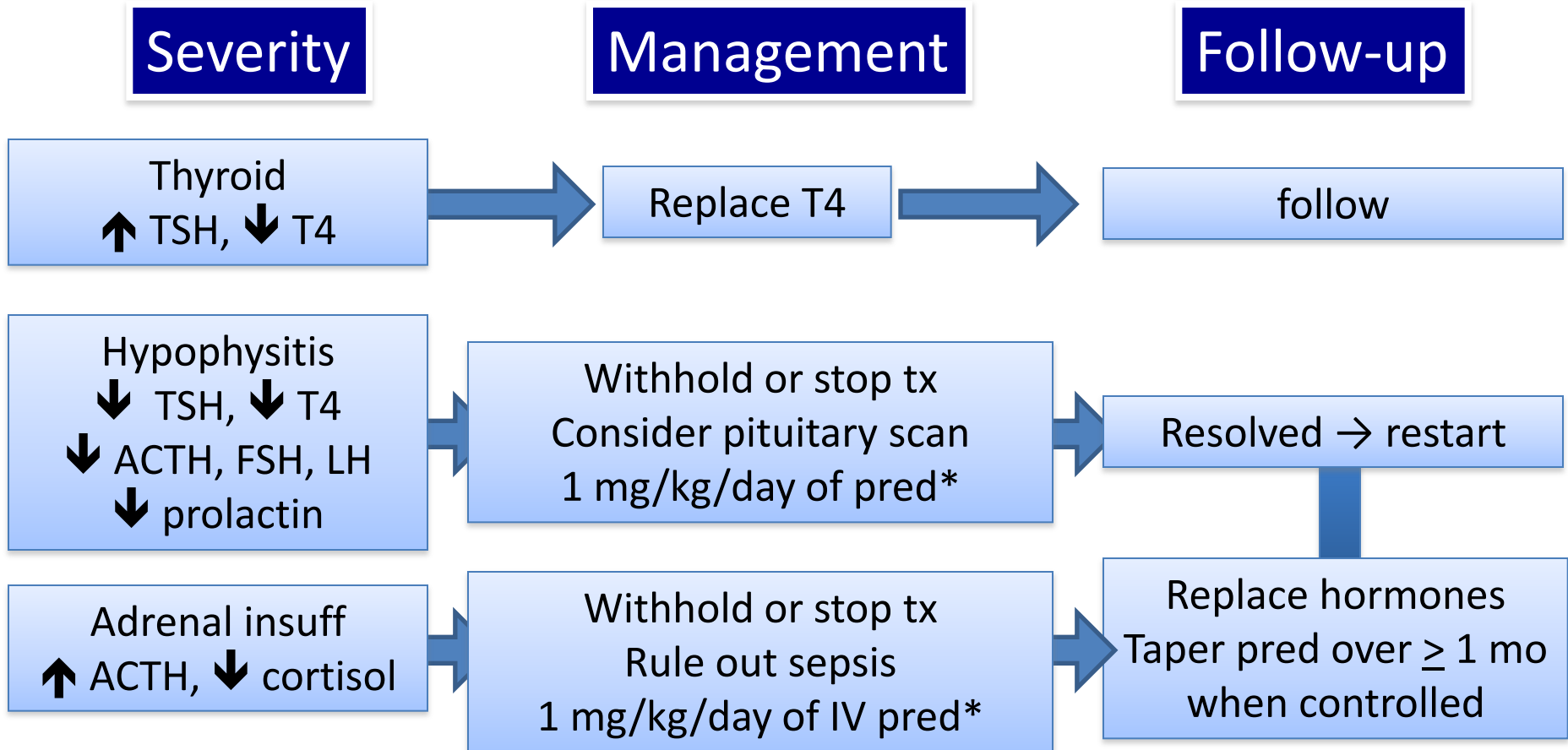
Medications  
Brain metastases  
Migraines  
Radiation  
Hypovolemia  
Steroid withdraw

## DDx (immune related)

Thyroiditis\*  
Hypophysitis\*  
Adrenal insufficiency\*



# Managing toxicity: Endocrine

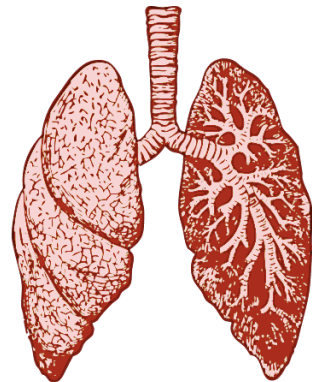


[http://www.accessdata.fda.gov/drugsatfda\\_docs/reams/Yervoy\\_2012-02-16\\_Full.pdf](http://www.accessdata.fda.gov/drugsatfda_docs/reams/Yervoy_2012-02-16_Full.pdf)

<http://www.opdivoyervoyhcp.com/servlet/servlet.FileDownload?file=00Pi000000SRPWfEAP>

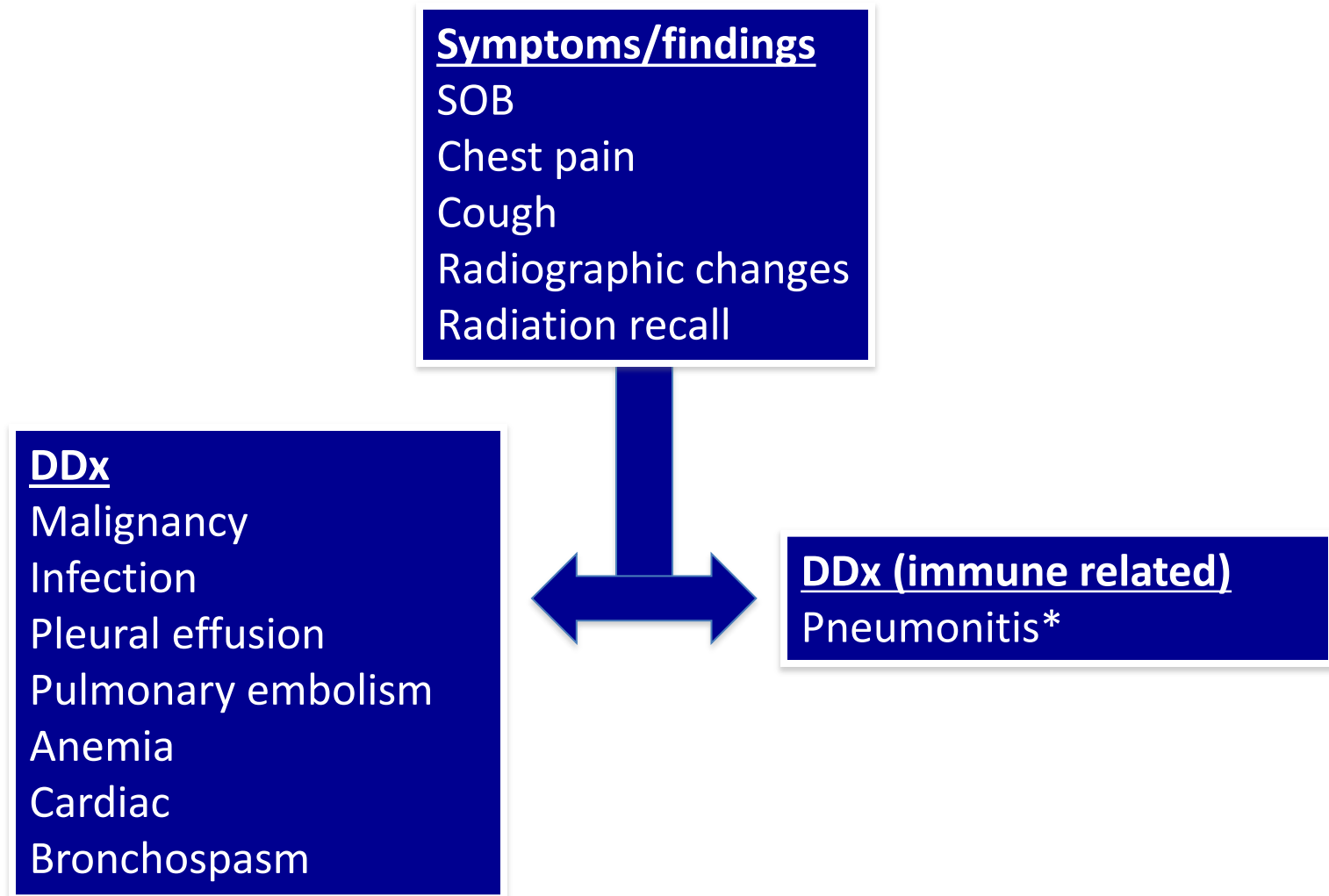
Naidoo J, et al: Annals of Oncology. 2015;26:2375-2391

- 50 yo male presents to the ER with SOB and cough.
  - He has metastatic melanoma that was treated with pembrolizumab for 6 months but stopped it 4 months ago (patient preference).
  - On exam he has mild crackles in the bilateral upper lung fields and has an O<sub>2</sub> sat = 89%.





# irAE: Pneumonitis



# Managing toxicity: Pneumonitis

## Severity

Mild to severe  
symptoms  
hypoxia

## Management

Withhold/ or stop tx  
Consider bronchoscopy/  
biopsy  
1-2 mg/kg/day pred\*

## Follow-up

Symptoms > 2 days  
Add infliximab

Taper pred over  $\geq 1$  mo  
when controlled

# Optimizing communication

- Patient - physician
  - Pts given card/bracelet to carry with them
    - Drug name and common toxicity
- Physician - physician
  - Please contact us if a patient is reporting symptoms that might be associated with irAE



# Considerations



- Pts on prolonged steroids have ↑ risk of opportunistic infections
  - When pred  $\geq$  20 mg x 4 wks = TMP/SMX double strength 3x week
- For now pts with pre-existing autoimmune disorders have been excluded from clinical trials

# Conclusions

- Immune checkpoint inhibitors are:
  - A new class of cancer treatment that is rapidly expanding
  - Associated with unique irAE's
  - Side effects are usually mild, but can be life-threatening if not identified and treated promptly
  - Good communication between providers is key



