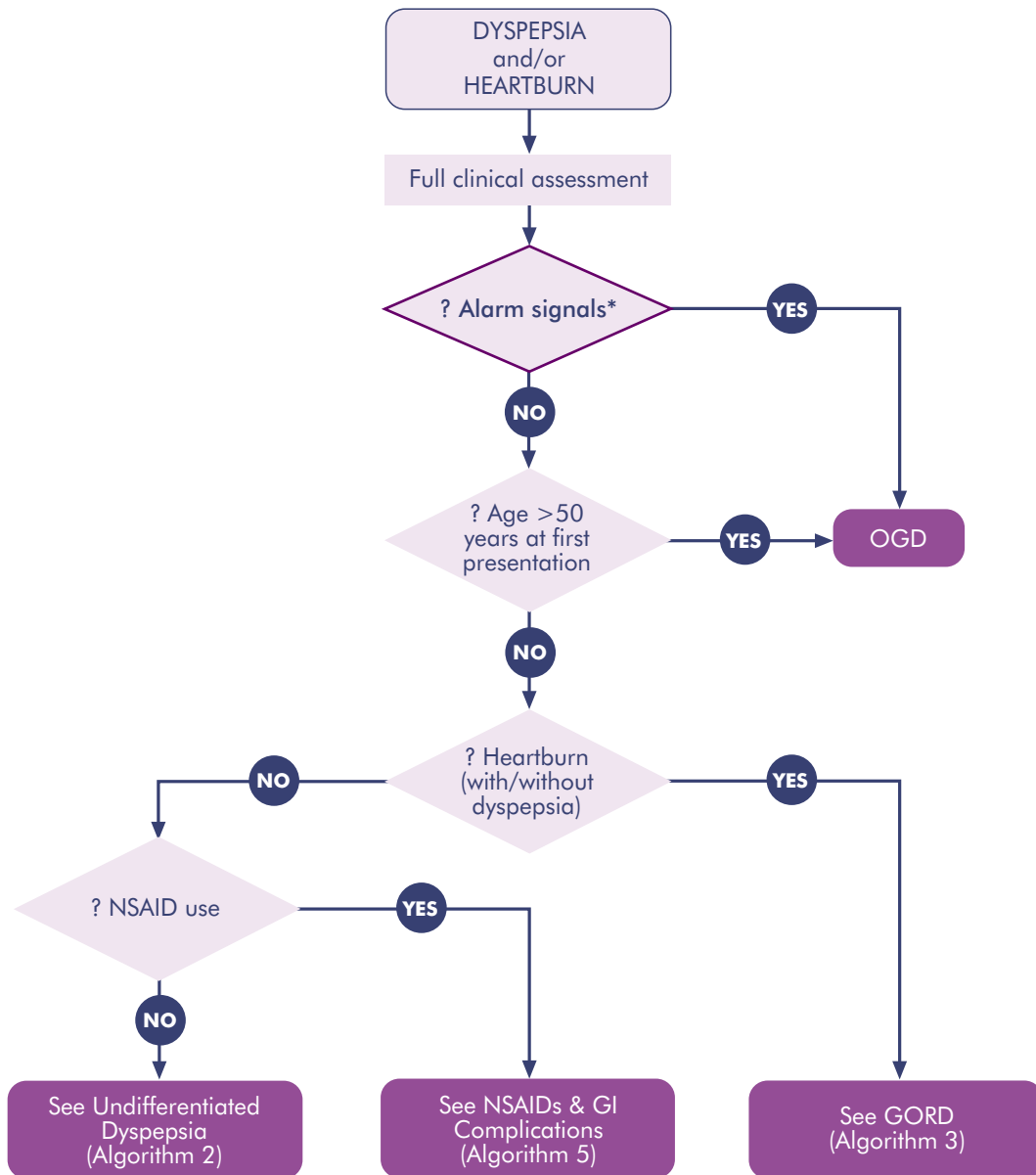


ALGORITHM 1

DYSPEPSIA and/or HEARTBURN: Initial Evaluation



*Alarm Signals

People with alarm signals must be referred for OGD investigation. Alarm signals, which increase the likelihood of significant organic disease, include the following:

- family history of gastric cancer (onset <50 years)
- severe or persistent dyspeptic symptoms
- previous peptic ulcer disease, particularly if complicated
- ingestion of NSAIDs in those at risk (see Algorithm 5: NSAID and GI Complications)
- unexplained weight loss

- gastrointestinal bleeding (haematemesis or melaena)
- anaemia
- dysphagia (difficulty swallowing)
- coughing spells or nocturnal aspiration
- protracted vomiting or persistent regurgitation of food
- palpable abdominal mass.

NB: All symptoms should be regarded as more serious in people who are aged >50 years when presenting for the first time. Gastric cancer tends to occur a decade earlier in people of Maori, Pacific Island or Asian origin.