Guideline for cervical spine clearance for pediatric trauma patients between 0 and 3 years of age

Child 0-3 yrs old in cervical spine collar

Trauma eval with c-spine x-rays
- AP/lateral
- CT scans if suspicious or inadequate x-rays

Abnormal radiographic studies → Neurosurgical management

Normal radiographic studies

Exam shows physical suspicions for spinal cord injury or high-energy injury?

No—intubated

Extubate with return to normal mental status within 48 hours

MRI c-spine study per Peds Trauma Protocol

Full ROM actively or passively without signs of pain in upright position (may need assistance)

No—nonintubated

Repeat exam at later time

Uncertain

Definite injury

No Injury

Go to nonintubated pathway (*)

C-spine clear

Neurosurgical management

Neurosurgical management with additional studies (i.e. flexion-extension x-ray under fluoroscopy)

C-spine clear
Guideline for cervical spine clearance for pediatric trauma patients > 3 years of age

Child in c-spine collar

Trauma evaluation and c-spine x-rays:
- AP/lateral/odontoid for age > 5 yrs
- AP/lateral only for age ≤ 5 yrs.

Communicative child ≥ 3 yrs old

Meets NEXUS criteria:
1. Absence of midline cervical tenderness
2. No evidence of intoxication
3. Normal level of alertness
4. Normal neurological exam
5. Absence of a painful, distracting injury

Normal neurological exam

Neurosurgical management with additional studies (i.e. flexion-extension x-ray under fluoroscopy)

Expedite MRI for clearance and removal of collar; refer to neurosurgery clinic in 1-2 weeks