HealthONE
Spinal Immobilization Decision Tool

Mechanism suggests need for spinal immobilization

1. Reliable patient?
2. Distracting injury absent?
3. Normal neurological exam?
4. Midline neck or back tenderness absent?

All 4 criteria met?

No Immobilization Required

Definitions

Mechanism of injury
- MVC/MCC/Bicycle/Equestrian accident
- Diving / Axial load
- Fall > 3 Feet
- Fall from standing – i.e. concern for elderly

Reliable patient
- No intoxication, altered LOC, acute emotional distress or language barrier precluding assessment
- Normal mentation
- Not non-verbal or pre-verbal

Distracting injury
- Sufficiently painful to distract from potential spine injury

Normal neurological exam
- No complaint of numbness, tingling or weakness
- No objective motor or sensory deficit

This is an aid for decision making only
This is not a substitute for good clinical judgment