

Thoracic Lumbar Spine Evaluation Guideline for Trauma Patients

General Guidelines

These “guidelines” represent a consensus on the management of Thoracic and Lumbar spine clearance in the acute setting. These guidelines are based on the opinions and clinical experience of multidisciplinary faculty. These guidelines are in no way meant to supersede the clinical judgment of the clinicians managing a particular patient. Since there is a small risk for the development of an abnormality in a delayed fashion, every clinician managing an acute trauma patient should maintain a high index of suspicion for an “occult” injury.

1. Patient with a known neurological deficit and/or concern for a spine injury should be seen by the spine service on call (Orthopaedic Surgery or Neurosurgery).
2. Patients with Three (3) or less contiguous transverse process fractures and no neurological deficit, do NOT require a spine service consult.
3. If the patient presents with pain in a delayed fashion a spine consult can be obtained.

For all questions please contact the Trauma Service at (314) 362-9175