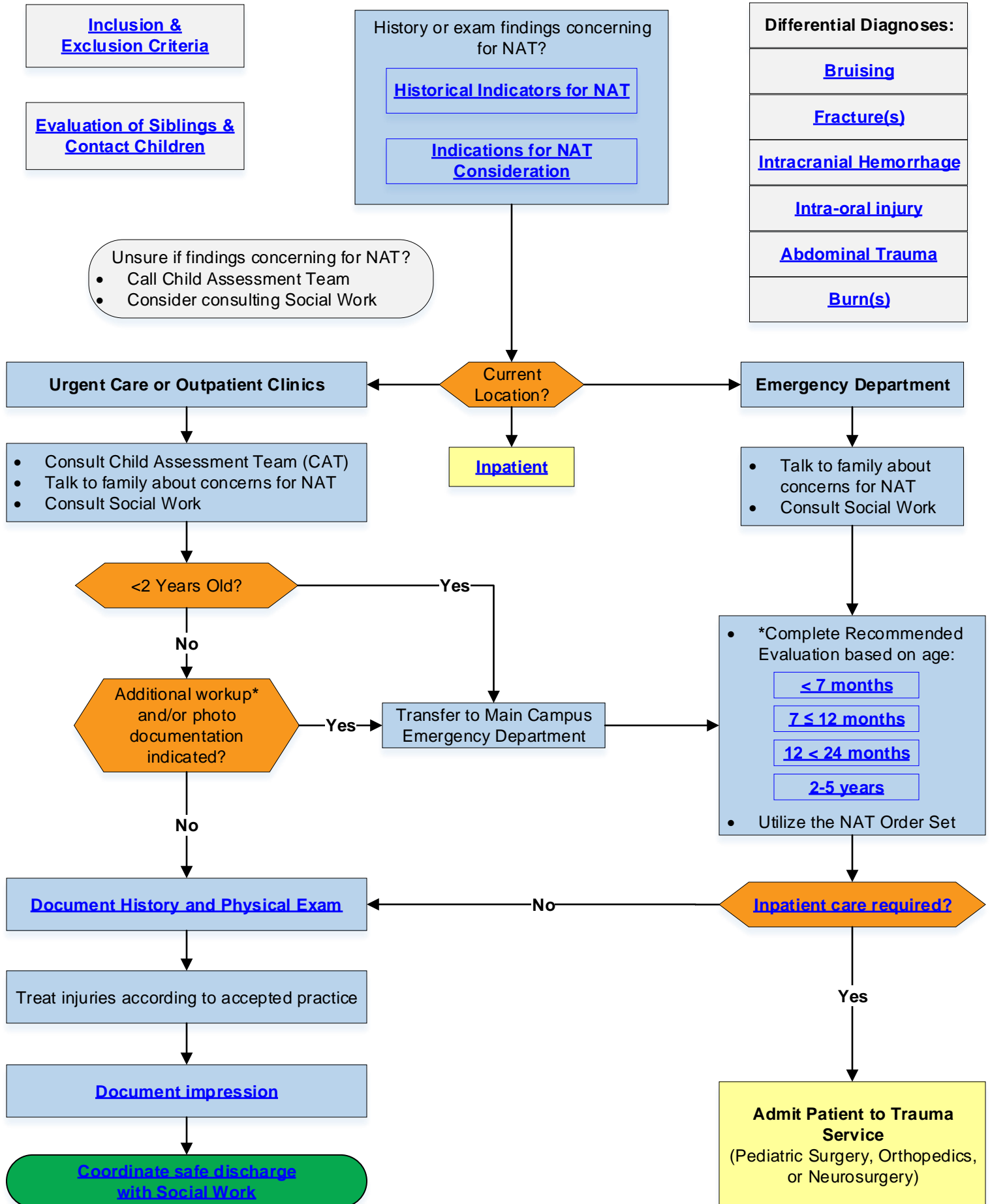


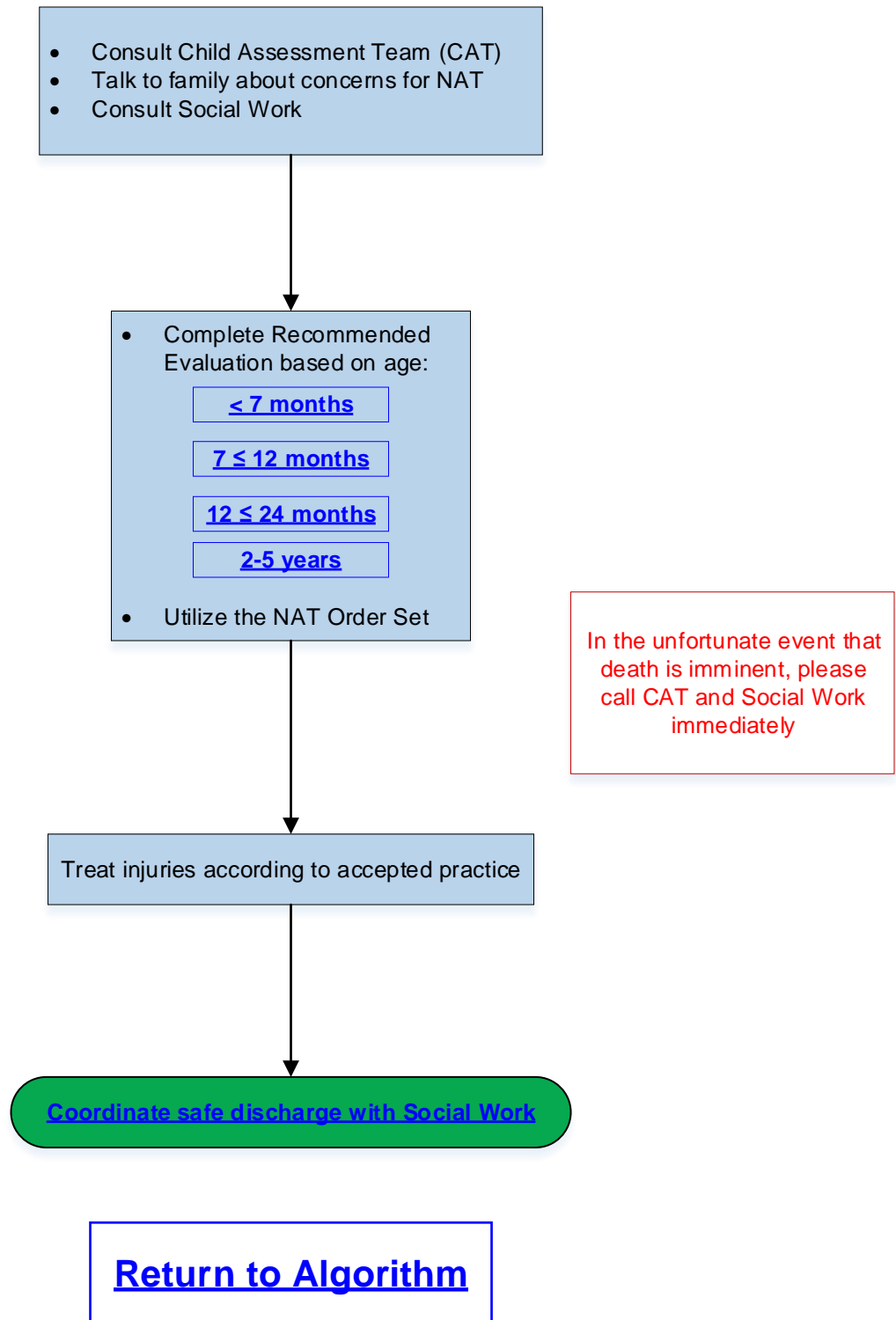
Non-Accidental Trauma (NAT)

Outpatient
Urgent Care
Emergency Department
Inpatient

Center for
Clinical Excellence



Inpatient Evaluation of NAT



Inclusion & Exclusion Criteria

Inclusion Criteria:

- Children with injuries concerning for non-accidental trauma (NAT)

Exclusion Criteria:

- These guidelines apply specifically to children who are suspected victims of child physical abuse and are not applicable to cases of suspected child sexual abuse, medical child abuse or medical neglect.

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Definition and Diagnosis

- The Federal Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act provides minimum standards to the states for defining maltreatment. The act defines child abuse as “any recent act or failure to act on the part of a parent or caretaker which results in death, serious physical or emotional harm, sexual abuse or exploitation” or “an act or failure to act which presents an imminent risk of serious harm.”
- Ohio Revised Code (ORC) defines an abused child as any child who “because of the acts of his parents, guardian, or custodian, suffers physical or mental injury that harms or threatens to harm the child's health or welfare.”

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Historical Indicators of Abuse

- Patient presents with injuries with no explanation or vague explanation of mechanism.
- Details of incident in which injury was sustained changed significantly or different witnesses provide significantly different histories of how injury occurred.
- Explanation of injury provided is inconsistent with patient's developmental ability.
- Caregiver or child reports physical abuse of patient.
- Medical provider witnesses inappropriate behavior by caregiver towards patient.

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Indications for NAT Consideration

<7 months	7-12 months	12-24 months	2-5 years	>5 years
<p>Unexplained fussiness, vomiting or altered mental status</p> <p>Cutaneous injuries (single bruise, burn, bite mark)</p> <p>Intraoral injury</p> <p>Subconjunctival hemorrhage</p> <p>Intracranial hemorrhage</p> <p>Fractures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rib • Scapula • Vertebral • Sternum • Hands/feet • Any long bone • Metaphyseal fracture • Multiple fractures <p>Sibling of child with suspected physical abuse</p>	<p>Unexplained fussiness, vomiting or altered mental status</p> <p>Bruising:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unusual location • Pinna • Neck • Torso • Buttocks <p>Pattern bruising, burns, or bite mark</p> <p>Subconjunctival hemorrhage w/o persistent cough or vomiting</p> <p>Intraoral injury w/o plausible accidental mechanism (including frenula)</p> <p>Fractures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rib • Scapula • Vertebral • Sternum • Hands/feet • Any long bone • Metaphyseal fracture • Multiple fractures <p>Injury inconsistent with developmental ability or with accidental mechanism described</p> <p>Sibling of child with suspected physical abuse</p>	<p>Unexplained altered mental status and vomiting</p> <p>Bruising:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unusual location • Pinna • Neck • Torso • Buttocks <p>Pattern bruising, burns, or adult bite mark</p> <p>Subconjunctival hemorrhage w/o persistent cough or vomiting</p> <p>Fractures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rib • Scapula • Vertebral • Sternum • Hands/feet • Multiple fractures <p>Injury inconsistent with developmental ability or with accidental mechanism described</p> <p>Sibling of child with suspected physical abuse</p>	<p>Unexplained altered mental status</p> <p>Bruising:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unusual location • Pinna • Neck • Torso • Buttocks <p>Pattern bruising, burns, or adult bite mark</p> <p>Subconjunctival hemorrhage w/o persistent cough or vomiting</p> <p>Fractures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rib • Scapula • Vertebral • Sternum • Hands/feet • Multiple fractures <p>Injury inconsistent with developmental ability or with accidental mechanism described</p> <p>Sibling of child with suspected physical abuse</p>	<p>Unexplained altered mental status</p> <p>Bruising:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unusual location • Pinna • Neck • Torso • Buttocks <p>Pattern bruising, burns, or adult bite mark</p> <p>Fractures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rib • Scapula • Vertebral • Sternum • Hands/feet • Multiple fractures <p>Injury inconsistent with developmental ability or with accidental mechanism described</p> <p>Sibling of child with suspected physical abuse</p>

If any of these indications are noted, utilize the NAT Order Set. If you have any questions, call the Child Abuse Team on call.

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Documentation of History and Physical Exam

History:

- Document the injury/symptom history as provided by the caregiver. If there is no history provided, document this as well.
- Note who was with the child when the incident occurred or the symptoms started.
- Document any interventions or treatments completed by the caregivers.
- Use quotations to document exact statements when possible.
- Document past medical history, family history, medications, and allergies.
- Document developmental history and/or limitations
- Engage Social Work who will assist with gathering history by completing an assessment

Physical Exam:

- Document a full physical examination including pinna, upper and lower labial frenulum and lingual frenulum, neck, torso, and ano-genital area/buttocks.
- Describe any injuries seen and notify Social Work
- Social Work and/or provider to complete photo documentation of cutaneous findings. All images of injuries concerning for NAT that are added to Epic should be marked as "Warning Sensitive Clinical Image".

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Differential Diagnosis Bruising

- **Accidental trauma** provided that a plausible accidental mechanism of injury is described by caregivers and the child is developmentally capable of the accidental mechanism provided (i.e. rolling off of a couch).
- **Coagulopathies and vasculitides** should be considered based on past medical and family history provided, as well as clinical presentation. Screening for coagulopathies is recommended to be done concurrently with the evaluation for non-accidental trauma.
- **Congenital dermal melanocytosis** may be confused for bruising and can be distinguished by distribution and coloration of the lesion, as well as persistence of lesion over time.

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Differential Diagnosis

Intracranial Hemorrhage

- **Accidental trauma** provided that a plausible accidental mechanism of injury is described by caregivers and the child is developmentally capable of the accidental mechanism provided.
- **Birth-related injury** should be considered in very young infants presenting with intracranial hemorrhage. All infants with intracranial hemorrhages should be evaluated by neurosurgery and the Child Assessment Team to determine if a birth-related injury is a plausible explanation.
- **Coagulopathies and vasculitides** should be considered based on past medical and family history provided, as well as clinical presentation. Screening for coagulopathies is recommended to be done concurrently with the evaluation for non-accidental trauma.
- **Underlying metabolic diseases**, such as glutaric aciduria type 1, should be considered; recommend obtaining Newborn Screening records.

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Differential Diagnosis Fracture(s)

- **Accidental trauma** provided that a plausible accidental mechanism of injury is described by caregivers and the child is developmentally capable of the accidental mechanism provided (i.e. rolling off of a couch).
- **Birth-related injury** should be considered in young infants presenting with clavicular or humerus fractures which can appear acutely up to 14 days of life and with signs of healing up to approximately 6 weeks.
- **Metabolic bone disease** including nutritional deficiencies (such as Rickets) should be considered based on past medical and family history provided, as well as clinical presentation. Screening for metabolic bone disease is recommended to be done concurrently with the evaluation for nonaccidental trauma.
- **Osteopenia** may predispose children to fracture with routine handling and care and should be considered, particularly in chronically ill children.
- **Osteomyelitis** may be considered based on the type of bony lesion seen and the clinical presentation.

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Differential Diagnosis Intraoral Injury

- **Accidental trauma** provided that a plausible accidental mechanism of injury is described by caregivers and the child is developmentally capable of the accidental mechanism provided.
- **Infection** may be considered if clinical presentation is concerning for an infection with oral lesions.

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Differential Diagnosis

Abdominal Trauma

Accidental trauma provided that a plausible accidental mechanism of injury is described by caregivers and the child is developmentally capable of the accidental mechanism provided.

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Differential Diagnosis Burn(s)

- **Accidental trauma** provided that a plausible accidental mechanism of injury is described by caregivers and the child is developmentally capable of the accidental mechanism provided.
- **Infection**, such as staphylococcus scalded skin syndrome
- **Dermatologic conditions** such as phytophotodermatitis, epidermolysis bullosa

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Evaluation < 7 Months

The American Academy of Pediatrics (Christianson, Committee on Child Abuse and Neglect, 2015), recommends the following evaluation for injuries suspicious for NAT:

- **Required**
 - Skeletal survey
 - CT head without contrast
 - CBC
 - AST
 - ALT
 - Alkaline Phosphatase
 - Lipase
 - PT
 - APTT
 - Electrolytes/glucose/BUN/Cr/Ca/Mg/Phos
- Consider:
 - CT abdomen/pelvis with IV contrast if AST or ALT > 80, elevated lipase, or abdominal bruising

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Evaluation 7 ≤ 12 months

The American Academy of Pediatrics (Christian, Committee on Child Abuse and Neglect, 2015), recommends the following evaluation for injuries suspicious for NAT:

- **Required**

- Skeletal survey
- CBC
- AST
- ALT
- Alkaline Phosphatase
- Lipase
- PT
- APTT
- Electrolytes/glucose/BUN/Cr/Ca/Mg/Phos

- **Consider**

- CT head without contrast if concern for head trauma, facial/ear bruising or intraoral injury
- CT abdomen/pelvis with IV contrast if AST or ALT > 80, elevated lipase, or abdominal bruising

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Evaluation 12 ≤ 24 Months

The American Academy of Pediatrics (Christian, Committee on Child Abuse and Neglect, 2015), recommends the following evaluation for injuries suspicious for NAT:

- **Required**

- Skeletal survey
- CBC
- AST
- ALT
- Alkaline Phosphatase
- Lipase
- PT
- APTT
- Electrolytes/glucose/BUN/Cr/Ca/Mg/Phos

- **Consider:**

- CT head without contrast if concern for head trauma, facial/ear bruising or intraoral injury
- CT abdomen/pelvis with IV contrast if AST or ALT > 80, elevated lipase, or abdominal bruising

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Evaluation 2-5 years

The American Academy of Pediatrics (Christian, Committee on Child Abuse and Neglect, 2015), recommends the following evaluation for injuries suspicious for NAT:

Required

- AST
- ALT
- Lipase

Consider

- CBC, PT, PTT, if isolated bruising present
- Skeletal survey if concern for severe multisystem trauma or developmental delay
- CT head without contrast if concern for head trauma, facial/ear bruising or intraoral injury
- CT abdomen/pelvis with IV contrast if AST or ALT > 80, elevated lipase, or abdominal bruising

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Strength of Recommendation

Quality of evidence

- 1: Strong Recommendation, High Quality Evidence
- 2: Strong Recommendation, Moderate Quality Evidence
- 3: Strong Recommendation, Low Quality Evidence
- 4: Weak Recommendation, High Quality Evidence
- 5: Weak Recommendation Moderate Quality Evidence, Weak Recommendation, Low Quality Evidence):

- Skeletal survey¹
- CT head without contrast¹
- CBC¹
- AST¹
- ALT¹
- Alkaline Phosphatase²
- Lipase²
- PT¹
- APTT¹
- Electrolytes/glucose/BUN/Cr/Ca/Mg/Phos²
- CT abdomen/pelvis with IV contrast if AST/ALT > 80, elevated lipase, or abdominal bruising:²

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Evaluation of Siblings & Contact Children

Young children in the same care environment of a physically abused child are at high risk for physical abuse. Twins are at even greater risk than other contact children.

A physical exam should be conducted on all siblings and contact children. If the physical exam reveals findings concerning for abuse, the child should receive the complete age-appropriate work-up.

For siblings and contact children *without* physical exam findings of abuse, evaluation is based on age:

- Less than 6 months of age:
 - Skeletal survey
 - Head CT
- 6 – 24 months of age:
 - Skeletal survey

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Documentation of Impression

- Summarize patient's age, injuries and/or symptoms and relevant findings on work up.
- Offer an appropriate interpretation of the findings in the context of the history provided by caregivers and notify caregivers of this impression, barring any acute safety concerns.
- Consider using dot phrases available in Epic to guide documentation based on level of concern for non-accidental trauma.
 - .NATDDx
- In cases where reports to child protective services and law enforcement are indicated, notify caregivers (barring any safety concerns), and document that these reports were made.

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Importance of Early Identification

- Early identification of NAT is critical for ensuring children's safety and can be lifesaving. In infants and young toddlers, injuries that are due to non-accidental trauma can be subtle, minor injuries, such as a bruise or frenulum tear, that do not require medical intervention to heal, but are indicative of an unsafe environment for that child. Proper management of these minor injuries includes evaluation for occult injury, as well as reporting the concerning injuries to appropriate agencies (child protective services and law enforcement).
- Initial symptoms of NAT, particularly abusive head trauma, can be non-specific with symptoms such as fussiness or vomiting. Infants with intracranial injury concerning for non-accidental trauma are misdiagnosed frequently and may present for care multiple times before the diagnosis is made. Keeping NAT on the differential diagnosis for these children and evaluating per published guidelines is crucial to avoid missing these injuries.
- Using a routine approach to evaluating children with injuries suspicious for NAT can help avoid missed opportunities to make the diagnosis by reducing implicit bias in which patients are evaluated. While some psychosocial indicators are known to increase risk of NAT, child maltreatment can happen to any child of any race or socioeconomic status and evaluations for NAT should be done based on objective findings on exam and history.

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Admission Criteria

- Children with injuries that necessitate additional evaluation or treatment.
- Children with multisystem trauma, as dictated by trauma protocol.
- Children for whom safe discharge cannot be ensured.

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Treatments Not Recommended

- A “babygram” (x-ray of the whole body of an infant) is not an acceptable substitute for a skeletal survey as it does not provide correct exposures for each component of the skeletal system. A skeletal survey is a series of ~24 x-rays defined by the AAP and the American College of Radiology.
- Ultrasound of the head is not an acceptable substitute for a head CT or brain MRI for evaluation for intracranial injury, as head ultrasound does not adequately capture the space in the convexities of the skull to evaluate for hemorrhage. (Christian, 2015)
- Ultrasound of the abdomen is not an adequate substitute for a CT abdomen/pelvis to identify intra-abdominal injuries as ultrasound lacks sensitivity and specificity to detect subtle injuries that may be of forensic significance. (Christian, 2015)
- Limited or fast MRI of the brain as initial evaluation for intracranial injury is not currently indicated.

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Discharge Criteria & Planning

- Social Work should be engaged to assist with safe discharge planning as they will communicate with Child Protection Services (CPS) and law enforcement.
- Disposition should follow guidance by CPS to ensure patient safety.
- Follow-up for children with injuries suspicious for NAT:
 - Child Assessment Team Clinic (CAT Clinic):
 - Children < 10 years of age or children < 12 years of age or who have developmental delays
 - Skeletal survey within 10-14 days for patients who had an initial skeletal survey:
 - This can be done in conjunction with the CAT Clinic Appointment.
 - Medical and surgical specialties as needed
 - Primary Care Provider to ensure continuity of care and ongoing support
- Siblings and other children in the same care environment may also need evaluation for NAT.

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Patient & Caregiver Education

- Social Work can provide Helping Hands related to NAT:
 - Evaluating Injuries in Young Children: A Guide for Families
 - Helping Hands: Skeletal Survey
 - Supporting Families of Children with Reportable Injuries
- Providers can utilize scripting resources available on ANCHOR
 - Suspected Child Maltreatment: Trauma-Informed Discussions with the Family
 - Supporting Families when we Suspect NAT: A Trauma-Informed Guide for Nursing Staff
- Other resources available:
 - Helping Hands: [Calming a Fussy Baby](#)
 - Helping Hands: [Healthy Sleep Habits for Infants and Toddlers](#)
 - Helping Hands: [Bathing Your Baby](#)
 - Helping Hands: [Burn Prevention: Infant and Toddler](#)
 - Helping Hands: [Home Safety for Infants and Toddlers](#)
 - Helping Hands: [Discipline](#)
 - Helping Hands: [Toilet Training](#)
 - Resources for Postpartum Depression (POEM)
 - Resources for Car Seat Safety
 - Contact information for CAP4Kids and ODJFS for financial resources

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Quality Measures

- Bundle compliance for use of NAT order set and completion of appropriate evaluation
- Return rates of patients with suspected NAT
- Compliance with undressing infants in the ED

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Pathway Team & Process

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Advisory Committee Date: January, 2020

Origination Date: January, 2020

Last Revision Date: August, 2023

Clinical Pathway Development

This clinical pathway was developed using the process described in the NCH Clinical Pathway Development Manual Version 6, 2022. Clinical Pathways at Nationwide Children's Hospital (NCH) are standards which provide general guidance to clinicians. Patient choice, clinician judgment, and other relevant factors in diagnosing and treating patients remain central to the selection of diagnostic tests and therapy. The ordering provider assumes all risks associated with care decisions. NCH assumes no responsibility for any adverse consequences, errors, or omissions that may arise from the use or reliance on these guidelines. NCH's clinical pathways are reviewed periodically for consistency with new evidence; however, new developments may not be represented, and NCH makes no guarantees, representations, or warranties with respect to the information provided in this clinical pathway.

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For more information about our pathways and program please contact:
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