

# C-SPINE INJURY

Remember Your NEXUS Criteria!!

## NEXUS C-Spine Rule

### SPINE Mnemonic

**S** Spinal midline tenderness

**P** Painful distracting injury

**I** Intoxication

**N** Neurologic deficit

**E** Encephalopathy

If a patient has any of these you cannot clear the C-spine and must obtain imaging.

### Extra Credit Pearl:

C-Spine Fractures to know:  
Jefferson bit off a Hangman's tit

Jefferson's fracture,

Bilateral facet dislocation

Odontoid fracture

Atlantooccipital dislocation

Hangman's fracture

Teardrop fracture

## Approach to C-Spine Injury

### 1) Airway AND C-Spine

Put on a cervical collar

### 2) Apply NEXUS Criteria (See Sidebar)

3) If all NEXUS criteria are negative remove cervical collar

4) If any NEXUS criteria is positive CT scan of cervical spine without contrast

5) If CT scan is negative (no cervical Spine fracture) Recheck NEXUS criteria:

1) If NEXUS negative → Have patient turn head 45 degrees to the left, right, and touch chin to chest. If they can do this without pain or neurological symptoms you can clear their C-spine and remove the C-Collar.

2) If NEXUS positive, or if patient has pain with neck movement 45 degrees to left, right, and touching chin to chest → You leave the collar on and have them follow up out patient

### References

Go S. Spine Trauma. In: Tintinalli JE, Stapczynski J, Ma O, Yealy DM, Meckler GD, Cline DM. eds. Tintinalli's Emergency Medicine: A Comprehensive Study Guide, 8e. New York, NY: McGraw-Hill; 2016. <http://accessemergencymedicine.mhmedical.com/content.aspx?bookid=1658&Sectionid=109387434>. Accessed September 28, 2016.