2020 Identification of Child Physical Abuse Clinical Guideline

**Red Flag Indicators**

- The child is non-ambulatory with fractures or bruises
- Injury inconsistent with child’s developmental level
- Injury is inconsistent with the history given
- Changing history over time
- Lack of history
- Unwitnessed injury
- Injury is attributed to the child’s siblings or pets
- Delay seeking medical care

**Soft Tissue Injury**

- \( < 4 \) months of age
- \( \text{AND} \)
- any bruise

- \( < 4 \) years of age
- \( \text{AND} \)
- bruises of: Torso, Ears, Neck

**Fractures**

- High specificity for abuse
  - Classic metaphyseal lesions
  - Rib fractures, especially posterior
  - Scapular fractures
  - Spinous processes fractures
  - Sternal fractures

- Moderate specificity for abuse
  - Multiple, bilateral, symmetric
  - Fractures of different ages
  - Complex skull fractures
  - Digital fractures
  - Associated non-skeletal injury
  - Fracture in a non-mobile child

**Head Trauma**

- Irritability in an infant
- Vomiting
- Altered breathing pattern; labored, irregular, apneic
- Seizures
- Altered level of consciousness
- Changes in tone in an infant
- Cardio-respiratory compromise
- Abnormal neurological exam

**Patterned injury**

**Suspicion of inflicted injury?**

- Report to Child Protective Services

- Transfer to PED1

This algorithm does not replace clinical judgment and is not intended to be prescriptive for all patients.