

# **Just a Cheat Sheet for the Initial Evaluation of Suspected Child Physical Abuse**

## **Consider abuse in *any* child from *any* family with *any* injury when:**

- Multiple injuries to multiple organ systems
- Denial of trauma in child with significant injury
- History inconsistent with injury
- History incompatible with child's development
- History that changes with time
- Unexpected and unexplained delay in seeking treatment

## **Suspected Abusive Head Trauma (including "Shaken Baby Syndrome")**

- Brain CT or MRI
- Skeletal survey\* for child under age 2
- Retinal exam (preferably by pediatric ophthalmologist)
- Standard labs\*\*
- Hospital admission to pediatric center
- Report to Child Protective Services\*\*\*

## **Suspected Abusive Fracture(s)**

- Skeletal survey\* for child under age 2
- Standard labs\*\* plus calcium, phosphorus, alkaline phosphate
- Brain CT or MRI for infants (<1 y/o) and consider brain CT or MRI for 1-2 y/o
- Consider hospital admission
- Report to Child Protective Services\*\*\*

## **Suspected Abusive Burns**

- Skeletal survey\* for child under age 2
- Photo-document if possible
- Consider standard labs\*\* plus electrolytes
- Consider hospital admission/pediatric burn center
- Report to Child Protective Services\*\*\*

## **Suspected Abusive Abdominal Trauma**

- Skeletal survey\* for child under age 2
- Abdominal imaging
- Standard labs\*\*
- Brain CT or MRI for infants (<1 y/o) and consider brain CT or MRI for 1-2 y/o
- Hospital admission
- Report to Child Protective Services\*\*\*

## **Suspected Abusive Bruising**

- Skeletal survey\* for child under age 2
- Photo-document, if possible
- Standard labs\*\*
- Consider brain CT or MRI
- Consider hospital admission
- Report to Child Protective Services\*\*\*

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\* **Skeletal survey** (not a babygram) as per the American College of Radiology standards. Look for rib fractures, metaphyseal fractures, skull fractures, long bone fractures. Consider repeat skeletal survey in 2-3 weeks to better identify rib and metaphyseal fractures.

\*\* **Standard labs include:** CBC with platelet count, PT/PTT/INR, LFTs, amylase, lipase, U/A.

### **\*\*\* Child Protective Services referral:**

Pennsylvania: 1-800-932-0313

New Jersey: 1-877-652-2873

Delaware: 1-800-292-9582

New York: 1-800-342-3720

Ohio: Call Childhelp at 1-800-422-4453  
for number of county agency

Maryland: Call Childhelp at 1-800-422-4453  
for number of county agency

West Virginia: 1-800-352-6513

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For free child abuse education, visit:  
[www.pascan.org](http://www.pascan.org)

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