

Key Points

Do not routinely perform whole-body CT scan on injured children

But

Do not delay CT imaging if history, clinical signs or circumstances of injury suggest a risk.

Target CT to body areas where there is clinical suspicion of injury

Use MRI where available for suspected cervical spine injury in children

Due to concerns around increased cancer risk following CT scans to children the recommendation is that an injured child should be examined by a senior clinician with expertise in managing paediatric trauma before a scan is requested and that any scan should be limited to the injured parts rather than a routine whole body image.

There is a risk that this policy leads to under-investigation or delayed diagnosis in injured children and clinicians should be reminded that this recommendation is made to limit unnecessary radiation, but if there any clinical risk of significant injury a CT scan should be performed promptly.

Note: While RCR protocol refers to CT for imaging of suspected cervical spine injury in children, NICE guidelines 2016 recommend MRI in this circumstance if available.

Links to:-

Royal College of Radiologists protocols

Royal College of Emergency Medicine response

NICE Guideline 41 (Spine Trauma) 2016

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RELATED INFORMATION	