

**STRAINS, SPRAINS, MINOR TRAUMA OF  
BACK, NECK, TRUNK**

Level I

**Skill Level:** LPN, RN

**Definition:** Minor forceful stretch or contusion of the supportive ligaments, tendons, or muscles of the spine and paraspinous structures. There is reasonable expectation the problem will resolve in a short time (approximately one week) if patient adheres to treatment.

<p><b>Subjective:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Patient complains of musculoskeletal neck or back pain with use but not at rest.</li><li>• Pain with little or no radiation.</li><li>• No bowel or bladder problems associated with injury.</li><li>• Usually there will be a recent trauma.</li><li>• Sometimes a chronic condition that is made worse with or without a new episode of trauma.</li></ul>	<p><b>Assessment: "Alteration in Comfort"</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Pain complaint related to recent trauma</li><li>• Impaired physical mobility related to musculoskeletal impairment/recent trauma</li></ul>
<p><b>Objective:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Patient moves, sits, walks, bends with little or no obvious torso deformity or disability.</li><li>• Muscle tightness may be present.</li><li>• Range of motion normal to slightly diminished.</li><li>• No deformity.</li><li>• Color, motor function, sensation distal to injury is intact.</li></ul>	<p><b>Plan:</b> <b>Patient education and self-care items for this protocol include:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Tylenol/Aspirin 1-2 tabs every 4 hours.</li><li>• Ibuprofen 200 mg 1-2 tabs QID.</li></ul> <p>At nursing discretion <u>may</u> use any of the below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ice for the first 24 hours then heat prn.</li><li>• Back or neck care instruction sheet.</li><li>• Instruct patient to return if not resolved in 1 week.</li><li>• Consider level II protocol.</li></ul>

## Strains, Sprains, Minor Trauma of Back, Neck, Trunk - Level I

### Nursing Education:

1. Any bowel or bladder problems associated with back or neck injury requires immediate attention of a medical provider.
2. Absent or diminished peripheral pulse requires immediate physician attention.
2. Frequently the complaints of pain are worse a few days after the initial trauma.
3. Sometimes there may be muscle tightness. This is different from muscle spasm which is a sudden, sometimes violent involuntary and abnormal muscular contraction.
4. Establish consistency (or lack of consistency) between mechanism of injury, objective findings, and pain complaints if possible.
5. Contusions: unbroken skin with pain, swelling and bruising need time to heal. Use ice/heat and over the counter pain meds. Does not require physician referral unless symptoms of neurological or circulatory impairment.


### APPROVED:

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Medical Services Manager

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Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Chief Medical Officer

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Medical Director

7/28/09  
Date

Date Effective: July 2009  
Revised: June 2009