

PRACTICAL PEARL: SCREENING for CHILD ABUSE

INTRODUCTION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The hardest job is thinking the unthinkable. A simple, memorable “hip pocket rule” that alerts a clinician in that moment is the clinical decision rule TEN-4.
INITIAL EVALUATION AND MANAGEMENT BY PRIMARY CARE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use TEN-4 for children under 4-years-old: a bruise on the Trunk, Ear, or Neck (TEN) needs evaluation OR, on a child under 4-months-old, <i>any</i> bruise needs to be evaluated for child abuse. In its PICU derivation, TEN-4 had a sensitivity of 97% and a specificity of 84%.
WHEN TO REFER	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All children identified by TEN-4 need consultation. If you think that your patient is an exception, run your reasoning through another clinician. Report to DCF and arrange an appropriate medical assessment for occult injury and underlying medical fragility. These situations are urgent. Though it is “only a bruise”, it can be an unpredictable, potentially fatal situation.
HOW TO REFER	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Direct referral to the Baystate Pediatric Emergency Department is sometimes necessary. Medical consultation is available from the Baystate Child Abuse Pediatrician. Call the Family Advocacy Center social worker at (413) 794-5070 or page through the Baystate operator (413) 794-0000 DCF Hotline numbers is (800) 792-5200, or call your local office.
WHAT TO EXPECT FROM BAYSTATE CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL VISIT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Baystate team will show your patient's family respect, abuse or not. Children are often admitted to preserve parent-child contact during evaluation. Thorough evaluation of both abuse and alternative possibilities. When necessary, we will work with DCF and the courts to protect the child's interests.

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