

Purpose

The purpose of this clinical practice guideline (CPG) is to review best evidence and generate expert consensus on recommendations for the management of rib fractures in adult patients (age ≥ 16 years) in B.C.

Key management questions

I. INITIAL MANAGEMENT OF MULTIPLE RIB FRACTURES AND FLAIL CHEST

1. What is the optimal approach to care of patients with multiple rib fractures with and without flail chest?
2. What is the optimal analgesic management for patients with multiple rib fractures with and without flail chest?
3. What is the indication for open reduction and internal fixation (ORIF) in the management of rib fractures?
4. What is the preferred approach to diagnostic imaging for the assessment of rib fractures?
5. What is the optimal time period within which acute rib fixation should be accomplished?

II. PULMONARY CONTUSION

6. What is the optimal management of severe pulmonary contusion?

III. TRANSFER TO HIGHER LEVEL OF CARE

7. What are the major considerations for transfer to higher level of care for patients with multiple rib fractures or flail chest?