



AAST Acute Care Surgery Didactic Curriculum

Penetrating Neck Trauma

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Highlights:

- A 3-zone anatomical approach has historically guided evaluation/management but the most current evidence-based protocols favor a “no-zone” approach to injuries
- Non-invasive imaging should be prioritized in stable patients with surgical exploration reserved for certain circumstances.
- A cervical collar is not recommended in the absence of neurologic signs as this can hinder evaluation and management of the patient.
- CTA has a reported sensitivity of 93.9-100% and specificity of 93.5-97.5% in the detection of all vascular and aerodigestive injuries.
- With distorted neck anatomy, an awake fiberoptic intubation is preferred as an RSI may result in loss of airway musculature leading to further compromise.