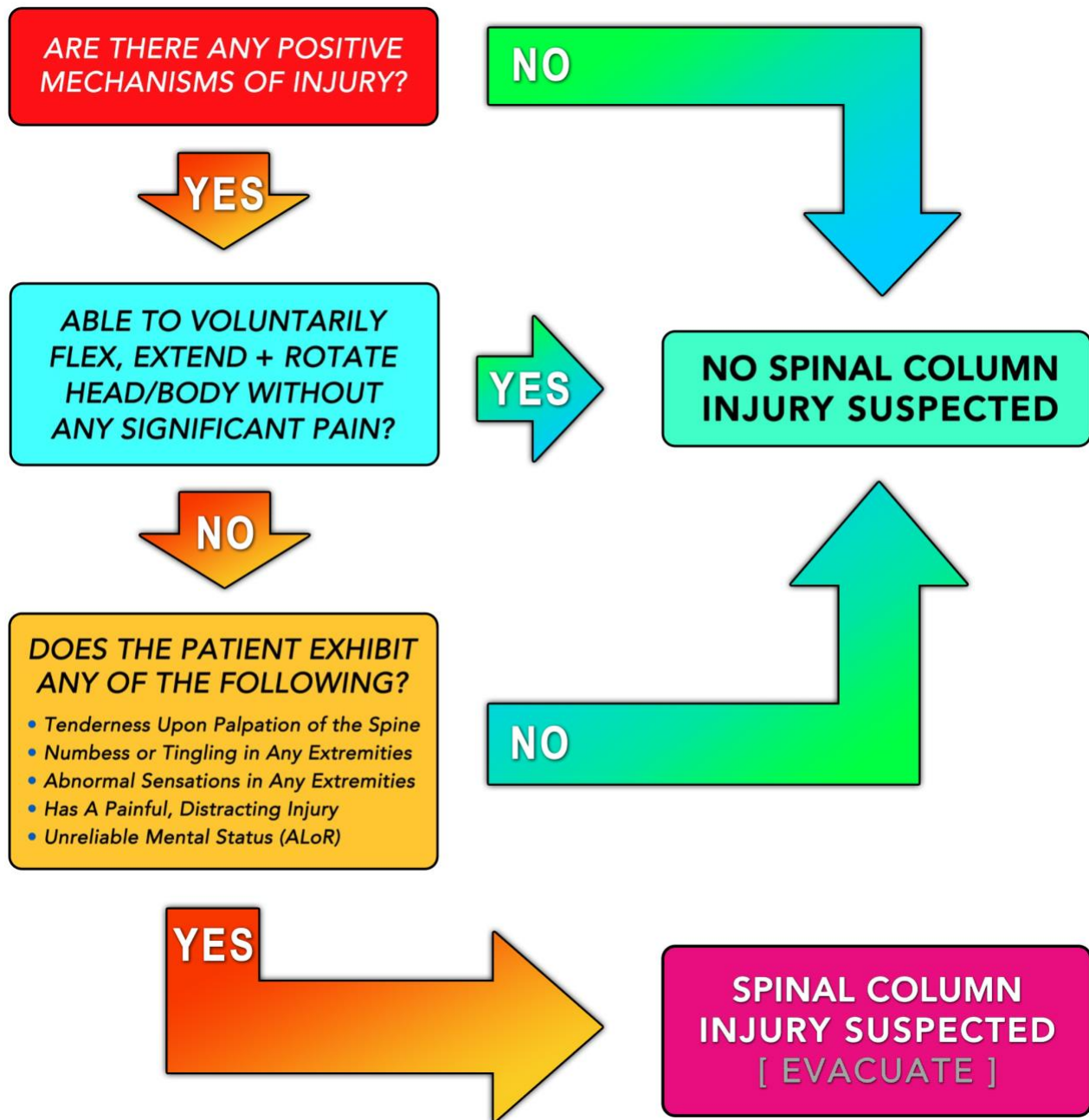


# Spinal Column Injuries

The spinal cord consists of nerves running continuously from the brainstem to the lumbar. Comprised of 33 vertebrae, the spine supports and protects the spinal cord, and is filled with cerebrospinal fluid (CSF) which allows the cord to move and swell if necessary. Injuries to the cervical spine (neck) may result in trouble breathing, which may be life-threatening. **Above C4, they Breathe No More...**

## Positive Significant Mechanisms of Injury:

- Fall w/ Loss of Consciousness
- Evidence of trauma from High Velocity Impact
- Landing on the Buttocks/heels (axial loading)
- Fall from Greater than 3 Feet
- Landing Head-First (compression)
- A Fall onto Rock or other Hard Surface



Start out with finding out if there are the High-Risk factors involved and follow the diagram based upon the answers (YES or NO) to each finding. Upon completion, you will be presented with a **TREATMENT OUTCOME** which should help you proceed one way or the other. **Remember:** this is just a guidance tool to help you decide, with reliable certainty, whether or not the patient most likely has a spinal column injury.