

## MRI Central Intake

As of October 29, 2018, all outpatient MRI requisitions for Lower Mainland Medical Imaging sites across Fraser Health, Vancouver Coastal Health and Providence Health Care must be directed to the **MRI Central Intake fax number: 1-866-588-6955**.

Faxing directly to the MRI booking sites will delay the process.

In addition to the regional MRI requisition form, referrals for lumbar spine, knee and hip must include the regional appropriateness checklist. Both forms are available at <http://www.vch.ca/MRI-Central-Intake>.

## Resources

Appropriateness criteria are consistent with the Choosing Wisely Canada recommendations. For more information, visit <https://choosingwiselycanada.org>

For appropriateness guidance from a radiologist, call the Rapid Access to Consultative Expertise (RACE) line: 1-604-696-2131 or visit <http://www.raceconnect.ca/>

Information for referring clinicians on MRI appropriateness can be found at: <http://www.vch.ca/MRI-Central-Intake> and <https://pathwaysbc.ca>

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# Appropriateness Criteria for MRI Lumbar Spine

## Information for Referring Clinicians

Lower Mainland Medical Imaging sites across Fraser Health, Vancouver Coastal Health and Providence Health Care have adopted appropriateness criteria for MRI lumbar spine exams. These criteria are consistent with the Choosing Wisely Canada recommendations.

### How will appropriateness criteria be implemented?

An appropriateness checklist has been developed to accompany adult MRI lumbar spine referrals. The checklist must be completed and attached to the MRI requisition.

### Why introduce appropriateness criteria?

The appropriateness criteria and checklist provide decision support to referring clinicians and support our commitment to quality improvement.

### What does this mean for referring clinicians?

- Referring clinicians must complete and attach a lumbar spine checklist to their MRI requisition for patients 18 years of age and older.
- The requisition and checklist must be forwarded to the MRI Central Intake office together.
- The requisition will only be forwarded to an MRI booking site if one or more of the appropriateness criteria are met.

### What are the appropriateness criteria for MRI lumbar spine?

One or more of the following must apply to be eligible for MRI lumbar spine:

- ✓ Cauda equina syndrome
- ✓ Unexplained weight loss, fever, immunosuppression
- ✓ History of cancer or suspected cancer
- ✓ Use of IV drugs or steroids
- ✓ Any neurologic symptoms
- ✓ Significant acute traumatic event immediately preceding onset of symptoms
- ✓ MRI was recommended on a previous imaging report
- ✓ Previous lumbar spine surgery
- ✓ Age over 65 with first episode of severe back pain
- ✓ Pain lasting 12 weeks or longer

### What should I discuss with my patients if they don't meet the appropriateness criteria?

- Lower back pain is very common. It is often caused by back strain and resolves within weeks without medical treatment.
- CT, MRI and X-rays rarely help with diagnosis and treatment.
- Discuss treatment and pain management options.
- Provide them with the Choosing Wisely patient handout "Imaging Tests for Low Back Pain".

Continue to monitor your patient and if their symptoms don't resolve, consider consulting orthopedic and rheumatology specialists as there may be other reasons for your patient's pain.