

Imaging – Spine

CERVICAL SPINE

X-Ray Indications:	X-Ray Not Indicated Routinely:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ? Atlanto-axial subluxation (e.g. Down's Syndrome, rheumatoid arthritis) • ? Cervical Spondylosis with nerve root signs (MR preferred but not currently available as direct access) • Injury with pain • Injury with neurological deficit - X-Ray + MR - requires A&E referral 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acute torticollis • ? Cervical Spondylosis in absence of nerve root signs • Degenerative change • Dizziness / headaches • Whiplash injury without clinical findings

DORSAL SPINE

X-Ray Indications:	X-Ray Not Indicated Routinely:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Injury with pain • ? infection • Injury with neurological defect (+CT/MR) • ? Myeloma - ask for skeletal survey • ? Osteoporotic vertebral collapse • ? Primary malignancy - localised bone pain (Nuclear medicine may also be required) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acute back pain with no history of trauma (unless vertebral collapse suspected) • Degenerative change • ? Metastatic bone disease (Nuclear medicine more sensitive) • Osteoporosis (unless vertebral collapse suspected)

LUMBAR SPINE

X-Ray Indications:	X-Ray Not Indicated Routinely:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ? Ankylosing spondylitis • ? Spondylolisthesis • First onset back pain in older patients (>55 years) and younger patients (<20) • Injury with pain • Injury with neurological defect (+CT/MR) • ? Myeloma – ask for skeletal survey • ? Osteoporotic vertebral collapse • ? Primary malignancy – localised bone pain (Nuclear medicine may also be required)ÂÂ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acute back pain in adults – symptoms may settle, six-week rule – thereafter referral to the NHS Lothian integrated back pain service is advised NHS Lothian Integrated Back Pain Pathway – RefHelp • Back pain with “red flag” signs – MR/CT required – plain films can be misleadingly normal and should not delay further imaging. Secondary care referral is advised Spinal-Red-Flags-Page-from-Old-RefHelp-Pain-Mgt.pdf (nhslothian.scot) • Chronic back pain in adults with no pointers to infection or neoplasm • ? Osteoporosis (vertebral collapse not suspected)

WHOLE SPINE

X-Ray Indications:	X-Ray Not Indicated Routinely:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Curvature of spine ?scoliosis or ?kyphosis (age 16-40) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All of the same reasons listed above (cervical, dorsal and lumbar spine) where x-ray not indicated • Patients younger than 16 and older than 40

