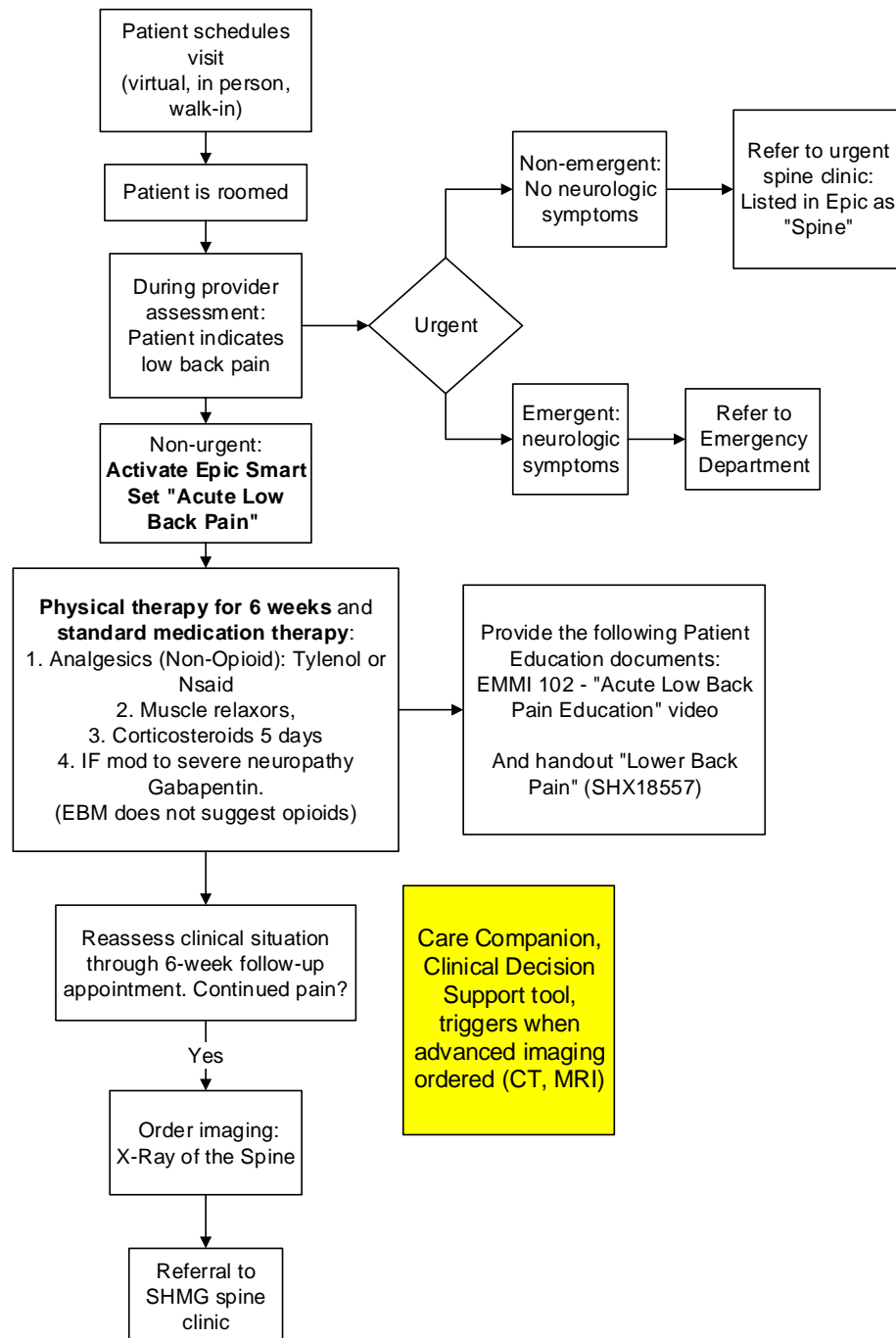


Clinical Pathway: Low Back Pain Imaging, Outpatient

Updated: December 15, 2021

Clinical algorithm:



Clinical pathway summary

CLINICAL PATHWAY NAME: Low Back Pain Imaging

PATIENT POPULATION AND DIAGNOSIS: Adults with low back pain

APPLICABLE TO: Spectrum Health West Michigan Primary Health sites and Urgent Care clinics

BRIEF DESCRIPTION: Care of patients who present to primary care with Low Back Pain. Aim to reduce high tech MRI CT / Low XR imaging and provide standard treatment.

OVERSIGHT TEAM LEADER(S): Kristopher Brenner, MD; Jason Fleeger

OWNING EXPERT IMPROVEMENT TEAM (EIT): Low Back Pain EIT

MANAGING CLINICAL PRACTICE COUNCIL (CPC): Primary Health CPC

CPC APPROVAL DATE: October 28, 2021

OTHER TEAM(S) IMPACTED: Radiology, Physical Therapy, Neuroscience CPC

IMPLEMENTATION DATE: December 2021

LAST REVISED: 12.15.2021

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT: Kris Brenner, MD

Clinical pathways clinical approach

TREATMENT AND MANAGEMENT:

This clinical pathway guides clinicians in the initial evaluation of adults with acute, nontraumatic low back pain thought to be of a spinal/musculoskeletal origin. The evaluation may include a trial of conservative therapy, imaging of the lumbar spine, and/or evaluation of serum inflammatory markers. Choosing the correct approach depends on the patient's presentation and risk factors for malignancy, infection, and vertebral compression fractures.

Most patients who present to a primary care setting with back pain will have nonspecific back pain and will improve over a few to several weeks with conservative therapy. These patients typically do not need imaging or measurement of serum inflammatory markers.

OPTIMIZED EPIC ELEMENTS:

- Acute Low Back Pain Smartset
- Care Companion, Clinical Decision Support tool, triggered when advanced imaging ordered (CT, MRI)

PATIENT EDUCATION:

- EMMI 102 - "Acute Low Back Pain Education" video
- Handout "Lower Back Pain" (SHX18557)

REFERENCES:

1. North American Spine Society: [NASS Diagnosis and treatment of low-back pain guideline \(spine.org\)](https://www.spine.org/Assets/Document/Tables/2018/2018%20NASS%20Guideline%20for%20the%20Diagnosis%20and%20Treatment%20of%20Low-Back%20Pain.pdf)
2. American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons: [Low Back Pain - OrthoInfo - AAOS](https://orthoinfo.aaos.org/topic.cfm?topicid=100)
3. American College of Physicians Endorsed by: American Academy of Family Physicians:
 - a. [Noninvasive Treatments for Acute, Subacute, and Chronic Low Back Pain: A Clinical Practice Guideline From the American College of Physicians | Annals of Internal Medicine \(acpjournals.org\)](https://www.acpjournals.org/doi/10.2196/medcarereform.2017.29)
 - b. [Low Back Pain \(aafp.org\)](https://www.aafp.org/afp/2017/0500/p1000.html)
4. National Institute for Health and Guidance
 - a. [Recommendations | Low back pain and sciatica in over 16s: assessment and management | Guidance | NICE](https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng195)