

Spinal Pain

- Acute and chronic mechanical spinal pain with or without radicular symptoms is suitable for interim GP management with referral to physiotherapy services for rehabilitation of the affected area and return to optimal function.

Information Required

- Injury or pattern of onset of pain/dysfunction (include mechanism of injury, date of injury, irritability and severity of pain/dysfunction).
- Past medical history of inflammatory disorders, gout, osteoporosis, OA, surgical history relevant to spinal area.
- Social history (inc IV drug use).
- Identification of “Yellow” flags (psychosocial issues that may affect compliance, presentation and response to interventions).

Investigations Required

- Diagnostic testing and imaging should be performed when severe or progressive neurological deficits are present or when serious underlying conditions are suspected.

Fax Referrals to

Fax: (08) 8204 3040

Red Flags

Red flags should prompt immediate GP referral to **Emergency Department**

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|---|-----------------------------|
| ☞ Current history of significant trauma, or minimal trauma with background osteoporosis | ☞ Signs of cord compression |
| ☞ Red, hot, swollen spinal joints without trauma | ☞ Cauda equine signs |
| ☞ Concurrent fever | ☞ Unexplained weight loss |
| ☞ Severe, unremitting, night pain | |

Suggested GP Management

- Exclude inflammatory/infective pathology (discitis, septic arthritis, rheumatological)
- Exclude fracture
- Exclude severe neurological pathologies
- Advice to remain active
- Pharmacological intervention (Simple pain relief)
- Referral to physiotherapy services

Clinical Resources

- NHMRC guidelines for the management of acute musculoskeletal pain
http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/files_nhmrc/publications/attachments/cp94.pdf

General Information to assist with referrals and the Referral templates are available to download from the SALHN Outpatient Services website www.sahealth.sa.gov.au/SALHNOutpatients.

Version	Date from	Date to	Amendment
2.0	November 2017	November 2019	Content updates