

# Cost of Care Resource

## Low Back Pain: An Evidence-Based Diagnostic and Treatment Algorithm and Resources for Primary Care

### What

Low back pain (LBP) is one of the most common musculoskeletal complaints that present to a primary health care setting. We have assembled a “toolkit” of resources designed to help primary care practices diagnose and treat patients with low back pain effectively and efficiently.

The contents of this LBP toolkit include:

- Clinical Practice Guidelines from the American College of Physicians (ACP) and the American Pain Society (APS)
- A systematic diagnostic and treatment protocol adapted from joint recommendations of the ACP and APS
- Links to useful websites for resources to share with your patients in shared decision making
- Links to Blue Distinction Spinal Centers if referral should be required

### Why

Both the AAFP and the ACP discourage the ordering of imaging studies in the initial six weeks of low back pain unless neurological “red flags” are noted by clinical history or physical exam.

Premature use of imaging studies in management of common low back pain can be detrimental to patients due to:

- Additional and unnecessary expense
- Radiation exposure
- Misleading “incidental” findings on imaging causing additional unnecessary tests, procedures and anxiety to patients
- These negatives can all occur with no improvement in patient outcomes, and most people with lower-back pain and absence of clinical “red flags” improve with conservative measures within a month.

### How

[Click here](#) to view the Low Back Pain Toolkit.



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