

Medical Treatment Guidelines

Washington State Department of Labor and Industries

Criteria for MRI of the lumbar spine

Indications for MRI of the lumbar spine

- Any neurologic deficit, evidence of radiculopathy, cauda equina compression (e.g., sudden bowel/bladder disturbance).

OR

- Suspected systemic disorder, i.e., to r/o metastatic or infectious disease.

OR

- Localized back pain with no radiculopathy (leg pain), clinical history of lumbar sprain or strain, and failed 6-week course of conservative care.

Indications for repeat MRI of the lumbar spine

- Significant change in clinical finding, i.e., new or progressive neurological deficit.

NOTE: The primary physician is strongly encouraged to coordinate with a subspecialist: i.e., a board certified spine specialist, orthopedist or radiologist, before ordering a repeat MRI of the lumbar spine.