

Pan-Dorset Lumbar Spine Plain Film Imaging Guideline

This referral guideline has been agreed for use across Dorset and applies to imaging requests for adults via inpatients, outpatients, GPs and Accident and Emergency Departments.

Lumbar Spine X-Ray MAY be indicated:

- ✓ Trauma
- ✓ ? Crush fracture – osteoporosis with sudden increase in pain
- ✓ Previous surgery – instrumentation, fusion.
- ✓ ? Fracture – Ankylosing spondylitis.
- ✓ Patients with pacemakers (due to being unsuitable for MRI).
- ✓ Pre-operative surgery – orthopaedics.
- ✓ Flexion and extension views for instability – laterals only and by specialist request.
- ✓ Scoliosis/kyphosis – Orthopaedic or rheumatology surgical cases + ? crush fracture.

Lumbar Spine X-Ray is NOT routinely indicated:

- ✗ Low back pain in adults.
- ✗ Sciatica.
- ✗ ? Degenerative changes.
- ✗ ? Metastases with no proven primary.
- ✗ ? Changes in/Diagnoses of Ankylosing Spondylitis.
- ✗ Spondylolisthesis.
- ✗ ALL rheumatology patients with **exceptions listed above**.
- ✗ Chiropractor referrals.
- ✗ Known osteoporosis.

If a pelvis and L-spine X-Ray is requested:

Only a pelvis will be obtained if L-spine is not justified as per indications above.

Lumbar Spine Imaging of children and patients up to 17 years of age is available by specialist request.

For more information contact:

Radiology Clinical Lead at your nearest hospital, either Royal Bournemouth Hospital, Poole Hospital or Dorset County Hospital.

HELP US REDUCE UNNECESSARY RADIATION EXPOSURE:

**Typical Effective Dose for a Lumbar Spine Plain Film X-Ray is 1.0 mSv
This is equivalent to the radiation dose from 50 chest X-Rays
or 5 months background radiation**