

Quality statement **3** Reserve imaging for suspected serious pathology



ADVISE that imaging:

- is important for identifying serious pathology
- is not indicated for people presenting to primary care with low back pain in the absence of features suggesting the presence of serious pathology
- can create unnecessary concerns when normal, age-appropriate findings including disc degeneration and bulges are mislabelled as pathology.

Monitor for changes in presentation that indicate a sinister pathology where imaging is required.



REFER a patient with alerting features for serious pathology or suspicion of fracture (as outlined above).



NOTE If imaging is indicated, MRI offers better sensitivity and a superior safety profile to CT and X-ray.



EXPLAIN radiological findings and any relevance to their clinical presentation/management if a patient has been imaged.



The Low Back Pain Clinical Care Standard was developed by the Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care.

**AUSTRALIAN
COMMISSION
ON SAFETY AND
QUALITY IN
HEALTH CARE**

The Australian Physiotherapy Association endorses the Low Back Pain Clinical Care Standard



The Low Back Pain Clinical Care Standard and supporting resources are available at safetyandquality.gov.au/lowbackpain-ccs

For more information about what the Low Back Pain Clinical Care Standard means for physiotherapists, visit australian.physio/inmotion/low-back-pain-standard-opportunity-physios