

Advanced Imaging Test Request Tip Sheet

Requested Documentation Related to Common Reasons for Denials

Spine (Cervical, Thoracic, and Lumbar) MRIs and CT Scans

- MRI is typically preferred over CT unless bony detail is specifically required, or MRI is contraindicated. If ordering a CT scan, clearly document why an MRI scan is not appropriate.
- Details of conservative care:
 - **4 weeks (Joints) and 6 weeks (Spine)** of active conservative therapy within the past 6 months (dates and/or date ranges). Active conservative therapy includes a trial of physical therapy, chiropractic care, or a physician-supervised home exercise program.
 - Details should include: start date, end date, frequency of sessions, body part treated, a general idea of what was performed.
 - Evolent offers a conservative treatment form which can be filled out by the patient, reviewed during the visit, signed by the doctor, and submitted as part of the clinical documentation.
 - If conservative care is contraindicated, please include the reason in the documents being submitted.

Brain MRI versus Brain CT

- MRI is typically preferred over CT unless bony detail is specifically required, or MRI is contraindicated. If ordering a CT scan, clearly document why an MRI scan is not appropriate.
- Chronic headaches or seizures are an indication for advanced imaging **ONLY** if the headaches are increasing in frequency, have changed in severity **OR** if new neurological deficits are present.

Abdomen CT and Abdomen/Pelvis CT

- Abdomen and Abdomen/Pelvis CTs deliver a high radiation dose and performing them with and without contrast delivers roughly double the dose.
- Alternative studies, such as **ultrasound or scope tests**, are frequently indicated prior to CTs and dates of the studies and results must be documented in the clinical information accompanying the imaging request.
- **Ultrasound should always be considered as the first imaging study in the evaluation of abdominal complaints in children.**
- Pertinent laboratory work that supports the diagnosis of inflammatory conditions such as appendicitis should be completed and documented in the clinical record before a CT request is made.

Extremity MRI (Hand, Wrists, Knee, Shoulder, etc.)

- An examination of the joint involved with documentation of findings consistent with the suspected diagnosis must be submitted as part of the clinical information when requesting an MRI.

- In most cases of persistent pain or suspected fracture, a plain x-ray should be documented in submitted clinical information before MRI is ordered.
- In cases of ongoing pain, **4 weeks** (dates or date ranges) of active conservative therapy without significant pain relief or information regarding the progression or worsening symptoms during the course of the therapy should be provided in the submitted clinical information prior to an MRI being ordered.

Chest CT

- A Chest CTA, not a Chest CT, is the most appropriate study to evaluate for pulmonary embolism.
- A Chest CTA is NOT usually indicated for evaluation of pulmonary embolism in a patient at low clinical risk for pulmonary embolism.
 - Suggest application/use of the “Wells” or “PESI” criteria.

Sinus CT

- The primary use of Sinus CT scans is to aid in the management of chronic sinusitis.
 - Thus, Sinus CT for sinusitis is appropriate **ONLY** after a period of supportive care (over the counter medications, rest, fluids, etc.) to rule out the most common cause, viral rhinosinusitis.
 - This must be followed by a trial of medical (antihistamines, intranasal steroids, and/or antibiotic therapy without significant improvement in signs/symptoms.)
- Brain/Sinus CT combination studies are rarely indicated at the same time since Brain CT almost always provides adequate views of the sinuses.

MPI (Myocardial Perfusion Imaging)

- If MPI is requested in lieu of treadmill test, clearly document the patient’s inability to ambulate on treadmill due to neurologic, orthopedic, or pulmonary issues.
- **MPI and Stress Echocardiography**
 - Both tests have equal diagnostic accuracy for coronary artery disease, with MPI showing greater sensitivity and SE showing greater specificity, however there is **NO RADIATION** associated with stress echocardiography.
 - Must document the supporting cardiac reasons/finding for MPI over Stress echocardiography.