



2009

LUMBAR SPINE MRI CRITERIA (MEDICARE)

MRI is the procedure of choice for evaluation of complex medical back problems such as infection, neoplasm, and architectural abnormalities. If a back study is not a critical determinant in treatment, for instance surgical intervention, the procedure should not be performed.

Lumbar Spine MRI is a covered benefit when **ONE** of the following criteria is met:

- Symptoms greater than 6 weeks in the absence of objective neurological symptoms and failed 6 weeks of conservative physical therapy; **OR**
- Focal neurological deficits indicating cord compression; **OR**
- Trauma with suspected cord injury or neurological deficit; **OR**
- Fracture fragments; **OR**
- Myelopathy; **OR**
- Metastases.