



Use of Imaging Studies for Low Back Pain (LBP) HEDIS® Measurement Year 2024

Measure description: This measure captures the percentage of members 18–75 years of age with a principal diagnosis of low back pain who did not have an imaging study (plain X-ray, MRI, CT scan) within 28 days of the diagnosis.

Eligible population

Member 18–75 years as of December 31 of the measurement year.

Best practice and measure tips

- Avoid ordering diagnostic studies within 30 days of a diagnosis of new-onset back pain in the absence of measure exclusions.
- Use correct exclusion codes as applicable.
- First-line treatment should emphasize conservative measures.
- Provide patient education on cautious and responsible pain relief, activity level, stretching exercises, use of heat.
- Physical Therapy referral, including massage, stretching, strengthening exercises and manipulation.
- Comorbid conditions such as sleep disorders, anxiety or depression should be treated, and psychosocial issues should be addressed.

Definitions

Eligible encounter settings include:

- Office visits, outpatient evaluations, emergency department visits, observation level of care, telephone visits, e-visits or virtual check-in visits
- Osteopathic and/or chiropractic manipulative treatment or physical therapy.

Index Episode Start Date: Earliest date of service for an eligible encounter during the Intake Period with a principal diagnosis of low back pain.

Negative Diagnosis History: A period of 180 days (6 months) prior to the IESD when the member had no claims/encounters with any diagnosis of low back pain.

Note: Members are excluded who have a positive diagnosis history during this timeframe.

Required exclusions

- Members in hospice or using hospice services anytime during the measurement year.
- Palliative Care
- Frailty and Advanced Illness
- Members who died any time during the measurement year.
- Measure exclusions identify members for whom imaging may be clinically appropriate within the first 4 weeks.
- Visits that result in an inpatient visit are not included
- Members with a diagnosis where imaging is clinically appropriate will be excluded. Timeframes for each are noted in the chart below.

Members with a diagnosis where imaging is clinically appropriate will be excluded. Timeframes for each are noted.	
Diagnosis	Time Frame
Recent Trauma	Anytime 3 months prior to the IESD through 28 days after the IESD
Fragility Fracture	
Prolonged use of corticosteroids (90 consecutive days of corticosteroid treatment)	Any time during the 366-day period that begins 365 days prior to the IESD and ends on the IESD.
Cancer diagnosis	Anytime in the member history through 28 days after the IESD
HIV diagnosis	
Major organ transplant	
Osteoporosis therapy or medication treatment	
Lumbar surgery	
Spondylopathy	
Intravenous drug abuse	Anytime during the 12 months prior to the IESD through 28 days after the IESD
Neurologic impairment	
Spinal infection	