



GP Guide for musculoskeletal imaging

Ultrasound is the first choice of investigation for a range of musculoskeletal (MSK) complaints and for investigating hernia in the femoral or inguinal canal or abdominal wall and superficial lumps and bumps. Patients with these clinical complaints will be seen in a specialist musculoskeletal ultrasound clinic where the sonographer has special expertise in these examinations.

We cannot examine lumps or masses in the neck, thyroid, axilla, breast or groin except those which are thought to be hernia.

Referral Guidelines

| Presenting Complaint | Imaging Guidance |
|---|---|
| Knee Pain, injury/trauma or swelling Baker's (popliteal) cyst | Ultrasound can offer information on the patellar and quadriceps tendon, assess the lateral and medial cruciate ligaments, and detect bursitis and effusions. Ultrasound cannot assess the posterior or anterior cruciate ligament so MRI would be beneficial in detecting these pathologies. |
| Limited movement, pain or swelling in the elbow | Ultrasound can detect olecranon bursitis - golfer's elbow and tennis elbow. |
| Limited range of movement and/or pain in the shoulder | Ultrasound may be used to assess the tendons of the rotator cuff and detect tears, thickening and degeneration. Ultrasound can also detect bursitis and impingement through dynamic imaging. |
| Pain in the wrist Symptoms of carpal tunnel syndrome Lump in the wrist | Ultrasound can detect synovitis, tenosynovitis, ganglion and carpal tunnel syndrome. |

Referral Guidelines (continued)

| Presenting Complaint | Imaging Guidance |
|---|--|
| Pain and or swelling in the ankle and/or foot | Ultrasound can detect ganglion, Morton's Neuroma, plantar fasciitis, Achilles tendinopathy and synovitis. |
| Pain and swelling in the hand | Ultrasound can detect synovitis and tendon tears and signs of rheumatoid disease. |
| Pain in the hip | Ultrasound can detect gluteal tendinopathy and trochanteric bursitis. |
| Pain or swelling in the groin Suspected hernia in abdominal wall | Ultrasound can assess the inguinal and femoral canal and detect any herniation/abnormality in the region. The abdominal wall can also be assessed for a hernia. Ultrasound can classify the hernia type through dynamic imaging. |
| Superficial lumps, bumps and masses | Ultrasound can aid in the diagnosis of superficial lumps by offering information on size, shape, location and appearance. Masses in the breast, thyroid, axilla, neck or groin should be referred to a specialist clinic where biopsy can be carried out at the same time as the ultrasound. Contrast enhanced MRI should be used to assess large masses which cannot be fully assessed with ultrasound. |

How do I refer a patient?

To refer a patient for an ultrasound complete one of our referral forms available from our website (www.inhealthgroup.com).

References

iRefer. Royal College of Radiologists. 7th edition, 2012.

Right test, right time, right place; a Framework for Primary Care Access to Imaging. Royal College of Radiologists and Royal College of General Practitioners, 2006.

For further information please call **0844 581 0301**
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