

Acute Joint Injury

- Acute mechanical peripheral joint pain (sprains, subluxation/dislocations) is suitable for interim GP management with referral to physiotherapy services for rehabilitation of the affected joint and return to optimal function.
- Acute inflammatory peripheral joint pain without trauma is not suitable for physiotherapy management and should be managed through medical intervention with appropriate specialist disciplines in the assessment and treatment of inflammatory disorders or other serious pathology.

Information Required

- **Detail assists in triage processes; Significant information is required or your referral may be rejected.**
- Injury/pattern of onset of pain/dysfunction (include mechanism of injury, date of injury, irritability and severity of pain/dysfunction).
- Past medical history inc. inflammatory arthropathies, gout, osteoporosis, OA, surgical history relevant to joint/limbs.
- Social history (inc IV drug use),
- Identification of “Yellow” flags (psychosocial issues that may affect compliance, presentation and response to interventions).

Investigations Required

- For consideration where relevant to the clinical presentation and may include:
 - Plain film X-ray
 - Bloods for inflammatory/infective pathology,
 - Diagnostic Ultrasound/CT/MRI imaging if suspected soft tissue damage

Fax Referrals to

Fax: (08) 8204 3040

Red Flags

Red flags should prompt immediate GP referral to **Emergency Department**

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| ☞ Current history of significant trauma, or minimal trauma with background osteoporosis | ☞ Joint derangement or inability to achieve any range of motion |
| ☞ Red, hot, swollen joint without trauma | ☞ Skin breaks with signs of cellulitis/infection in surrounding tissue |
| ☞ Concurrent fever | ☞ Bilateral symptomology |
| ☞ Severe, unremitting, night pain | |

Suggested GP Management

- Exclude inflammatory/infective pathology (gout, septic arthritis, rheumatological)
- Exclude fracture or ongoing dislocation/subluxation
- Exclude neurological, systemic, and polyarthropathy pathologies
- Exclude hip pathologies in paediatric patients with hip or knee pain without trauma
- Rest, Ice, Compression, Elevation of injured joint
- Pharmacological intervention (Simple pain relief (non-opioid), Non-steroidal anti-inflammatories, opioid pain relief)
- Referral to physiotherapy services

Clinical Resources

- Clinical guidelines for musculoskeletal diseases
<http://www.racgp.org.au/your-practice/guidelines/musculoskeletal/>
- NHMRC guidelines for the management of acute musculoskeletal pain
http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/files_nhmrc/publications/attachments/cp94.pdf

General Information to assist with referrals and the Referral templates are available to download from the SALHN Outpatient Services website www.sahealth.sa.gov.au/SALHNOutpatients.

Version	Date from	Date to	Amendment
2.0	November 2017	November 2019	Content updates