



Appropriateness Criteria for MRI Head for Headache

Information for Referring Family Physicians and Nurse Practitioners

Island Health Medical Imaging has adopted appropriateness criteria for MRI Head for Headache exams. These criteria are consistent with the Choosing Wisely Canada recommendations.

How will the appropriateness criteria be implemented?

An appropriateness checklist has been developed to accompany MRI Head for Headache referrals. The checklist must be completed by all Family Physicians and Nurse Practitioners and attached to the MRI requisition.

Why introduce appropriateness criteria?

The appropriateness criteria and checklist provide decision making support to referring Family Physicians and Nurse Practitioners and support our commitment to quality improvement.

What does mean for referring Family Physicians and Nurse Practitioners?

- Referring Family Physicians and Nurse Practitioners must complete and attach the head for headache checklist to the MRI requisition.
- The requisition and checklist must be submitted to the Booking Office together.
- Any MRI Head for Headache requisitions received without the appropriateness checklist attached will be sent back to the referring Family Physician or Nurse Practitioner as an incomplete requisition.
- The referring Family Physician or Nurse Practitioner will have to resubmit the MRI Head for Headache requisition with the appropriateness checklist attached in order for the MRI Head for Headache to be scheduled.

What are the appropriateness criteria for MRI Head for Headache?

One or more of the following criteria must apply for your patient to be eligible for an MRI Head for Headache:

- Rapidly increasing frequency and severity of headache
- Headache causing the patient to wake from sleep
- Headache with associated neurological deficit
- New onset of headache in a patient with a history of cancer
- New onset of headache in a patient with immunodeficiency or concern for infection

Additional Resources?

Appropriateness criteria are consistent with the Choosing Wisely Canada recommendations. For more information, visit <https://choosingwiselycanada.org>

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