



***“ If I have already made a diagnosis, what is the added value of a radiological examination? ”***

**If the clinical examination has provided you with sufficient information for your diagnosis, a radiological examination may not be necessary**

Do you consider that you already have sufficient information for your diagnosis? Or do you think that a radiological examination might modify the diagnosis or influence the treatment? Or, maybe, you would like to wait for a while to see how the situation develops? A medical imaging examination is useful if its outcome - either positive or negative - influences patient management or strengthens confidence in the diagnosis. The patient might be reassured at the time, but this in itself does not justify a radiological examination which might be unnecessary.

***Talk to your patients about it!***

# Avoiding an unnecessary radiological examination protects the patient's interests!



## The benefits for the patients

- They avoid unnecessary exposure to ionising radiation
- They do not need to spend time having an examination which is not indicated and waiting for the results
- They can start their treatment without delay
- Additional expense is avoided



The appropriate use of imaging improves healthcare management for everyone: providing enhanced availability of equipment and control of costs

## How to talk about ionising radiation?

Exposure to X-rays can damage the cells in the human body and potentially increase the risk of developing cancer later in life. This risk is assumed to be proportional to the dose received and thus increases with the number of examinations performed. There are techniques to reduce the radiation dose while still producing images with the quality required to answer the clinical question. If a radiological procedure is indicated and it is performed with the proper technique, the clinical benefits will outweigh the radiation risks.

## What happens in cases of lower back pain?

Back pain is sometimes unbearable, and the patient might ask for an X-ray, a CT scan or an MRI scan to search for the cause. If there are no more specific symptoms, it is likely that these examinations will not provide any further information to help the patient. In the vast majority of cases, the back pain subsides in about 1 month and most patients feel better, whether they have had a radiological examination or not. Lateral radiography of the lumbar spine delivers a dose equivalent to 6 months of exposure to natural radiation, i.e. an effective dose of 1.5 mSv<sup>1</sup>.

1. Source: <https://www.radiologyinfo.org/en/info.cfm?pg=safety-xray>

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