

Rapid Access Spine Triage Program

A New Program for Patients with Non-Emergent Spinal Complaints

Vancouver Coastal Health (VCH) is pleased to introduce a new program for patients with non-emergent spinal complaints.

The Rapid Access Spine Triage Program represents a new and enhanced standard of service at Vancouver General Hospital's Brenda and David McLean Integrated Spine Clinic.

Program Overview

The Rapid Access Spine Triage Program identifies and triages patients who need to see a surgeon, and provides referring physicians and patients with evidence-based directions for care when a surgical consultation is not appropriate.

Consistent with national standards and practices, senior advanced practice physiotherapists (APPs) with spine-specific advanced training work collaboratively with medical practitioners and spine surgeons and serve as the patient's first clinical point of contact.

Patients receive a comprehensive clinical assessment by an APP to determine whether a consultation with a spine surgeon is required. The initial visit is not an appointment for physiotherapy treatment, but rather a detailed interview, physical examination, review of available diagnostic imaging and an identification of any issues that may require further discussion with a surgeon.

Patient Benefits

Successfully piloted in 2017, the program decreases patient wait time for assessment and treatment of non-emergent spinal complaints.

Referring physicians receive a timely, detailed report outlining the clinical impression and recommended treatments.

Patients requiring a surgical consultation are booked on an expedited basis with the appropriate, next available, spine surgeon.

Patient Eligibility

The Rapid Access Spine Triage Program is for patients with non-emergent spinal complaints involving the cervical, thoracic and lumbar spine.

Emergent cases will continue to be referred to the spine surgeon on-call.

Referral Process

To refer a patient to the Rapid Access Spine Triage Program, use the referral form [here](#).

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