



**PRIMARY CARE**

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**Audit Toolkit**

# Acute Low Back Pain

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**Disclaimer: This audit toolkit is independently produced. It does not represent the policy or position of either the National Health Service Executive or the National Institute for Clinical Excellence.**

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# Introduction: PLEASE READ THIS FIRST

## WELCOME TO THE AUDIT TOOLKIT FOR ACUTE BACK PAIN

- This toolkit was developed to accompany the first revision of the RCGP Acute Back Pain Guideline issued in February, 1999. The Guideline's next review date is December, 2001. However, it is anticipated that most of this audit will remain relevant beyond this date.
- This is an audit of the first contact events for patients in primary care with low back pain of duration up to six weeks.
- The toolkit is recommended for use by those who wish to audit the management of acute back pain, either across the main professions who provide first contact care, or within individual professional groups.
- The Guideline provides evidence-based recommendations on specific aspects of care (as distinct from the whole range of treatment options available), and the audit toolkit should be seen in this context. The toolkit also offers educational material, linked to the evidence, to help in this.
- The Guideline, and this Audit, relate primarily to the first 6 weeks of an episode of back pain, regardless of when the patient presents. Therefore, the first presentation may not be close to the onset and the recommendations can become time-sensitive.
- Patients who have recurrences of previous back pain may be included, provided the present episode is of less than 6 weeks' duration.
- The audit is retrospective, over a period at your discretion. During testing, it was found that most practitioners would see 5 eligible patients within 6 weeks.

### This toolkit is produced in 3 sections:

- Background information
- General practitioner audit pack
- Audit pack for chiropractors, osteopaths and manipulation physiotherapists (COMP)

**All the materials in this toolkit may be photocopied freely**

(Note: This toolkit does not dictate care over professional judgement)