

MEMORANDUM

TO	Chief Medical Officers and Directors of Allied Health
FROM	Peter Watson, National Director-Medical
DATE	1 June 2023

Subject Reference:

Roll-out of a national guideline on “Follow-up Imaging after Knee Arthroplasty”.

Request:

Please distribute to Orthopaedic and Physiotherapy services in your Region/ District

Guideline: Imaging after Knee Arthroplasty

An initial, high quality, standing knee x-ray series, acceptable to an orthopaedic surgeon, is required within a year of index surgery as a minimum.

Subsequent knee x-rays should be on clinical grounds and not requested as “routine”.

Background:

This guideline has been adopted from a statement by the NZ Knee and Sports Surgery Society, as a sub-specialty group of the NZ Orthopaedic Association, in 2022 and was brought forward by the National Radiology Advisory Group for support with its uptake across Te Whatu Ora HSS.

There is an opportunity with adoption of this guideline to reduce the volume of low yield imaging done across the country. Published studies have shown that with an initial x-ray series confirming orthopedically-acceptable post-arthroplasty appearances, routine follow-up x-rays are unlikely to be cost-effective.

It is acknowledged restricting referrals for further follow-up x-rays to symptomatic patients may already be standard practice in your district in which case, this guideline reinforces this approach.

Alongside this roll out, the National Radiology Network is working with the National Pathways team to ensure primary care referrers are aware that knee pain with previous arthroplasty is an appropriate and accepted indication for direct x-ray referral.