

Suspected Cauda Equina Syndrome

Joint Network Guidance

Summer 2024

WHAT DO I DO IF I SUSPECT CES?



1. Assess symptoms against the [NSCESP triage tool](#)
2. If symptoms could represent CES as per [triage tool](#) - assess duration
3. If duration [more than 2 weeks](#)
 - a. **DO** Refer to MSK / interface services urgently – mark referral as urgent and that patient has > 2 weeks of symptoms consistent with suspected CES
 - b. **DO NOT** not send to ED
 - c. **DO NOT** not refer emergently for an MRI scan
4. If duration [less than 2 weeks](#)
 - a. **DO** refer to your local secondary care service as per your established pathway for CES
5. If symptoms not representative of CES as per [triage tool](#)
 - a. **DO NOT** send to ED
 - b. **DO NOT** refer emergently
 - c. Safety net patient (consider literature below) and refer for the symptoms to MSK/interface services if appropriate. Consider other causes for symptoms

WHAT DO I DO IF AN MRI REPORT SUGGESTS RADIOLOGICAL CES?



1. CES is a clinical syndrome NOT radiological
2. Radiology supports a clinical diagnosis
3. **DO NOT** send to ED nor refer emergently to secondary care on call services without further assessment
4. **DO** a same day assessment of the patient and screen for symptoms of CES as per NSCESP [triage tool](#)
5. If no symptoms consistent with CES:
 - a. Safety net patient and **DO** refer urgently to elective spine surgical services with the current symptoms and the MRI findings
 - b. **DO NOT** send to ED
 - c. **DO NOT** not refer emergently
6. If symptoms could represent CES as per [triage tool](#) - assess duration
7. If duration [more than 2 weeks](#)
 - a. **DO** refer to elective spine services URGENTLY – mark referral as urgent and that patient has > 2 weeks of symptoms consistent with suspected CES and MRI findings
 - b. **DO NOT** send to ED
 - c. It is reasonable to take advice from on call services as per your local pathway
 - d. **DO NOT** refer to MSK services as imaging is complete and positive; so a spine surgical opinion is appropriate
8. If duration [less than 2 weeks](#)
 - a. **DO** Refer to your local secondary care service as per your established pathway for CES

MORE RESOURCES


[National Suspected CES pathway \(NSCESP\)](#)
[Safety Net Cards \(Multiple Languages Available\)](#)
[Safety Net Video \(YouTube\)](#)
[MRI Patient Information \(NHS\)](#)

For More Information about our Networks visit:

wmidsimagingnetwork.nhs.uk

mcctn.org.uk/about-the-network.html