

Patient Guide to the Musculoskeletal Central Intake and Assessment Centre for Low Back Pain

About the MSK CIAC Low Back Pain Program

The Ontario Health (West) Hamilton Niagara Haldimand Brant (HNHB) Musculoskeletal (MSK) Central Intake and Assessment Centre (CIAC) is designed to provide you with timely assessment of your low back pain condition, and a personalized self-management plan that will allow you to manage your low back pain.

How do I get referred?

Your family doctor or nurse practitioner can refer you to MSK CIAC for an initial assessment of your low back and/or low back related leg pain to determine the next steps in your care. The program is fully covered by OHIP.

Who is eligible for this program?

The program is for patients who are 18 years of age and over and:

- Live with unmanageable low back pain and/or related symptoms (e.g.: sciatica, neurogenic claudication) which have lasted for at least 6 weeks but not longer than 12 months.

OR

- Live with unmanageable low back pain and/or related symptoms that occur some of the time, with less than 12 months between occurrences.

How will my referral be handled?

You will be assessed by an Advanced Practice Provider (APP) who is a regulated healthcare professional, such as a physiotherapist or chiropractor, with specialized training in low back care.

Your assessment will be scheduled with an APP with a practice location nearest to your home. After receiving your referral, the APP's office will contact you to book your appointment. You can expect an appointment date within four weeks.

How long is the assessment?

Your assessment will be approximately one hour long. Please arrive **15 minutes** before your appointment time to complete the necessary paperwork.

What happens during an assessment?

- The APP will complete a full history and physical examination of your condition. You will be provided with an explanation as to the likely causes of your low back and/or low back related leg symptoms.
- You will be provided with a self-management plan to better manage your pain, improve your mobility and your overall function. Additional services (e.g., exercise rehabilitation, manual therapy) from a community healthcare provider may be recommended, as they are not provided by this program.
- Surgery may be suggested for some patients. These patients will be provided with access to a spine specialist and diagnostic imaging (X-ray, MRI) as required.
- If you require further surgical assessment, you will be offered the next available appointment or have the option to choose an appointment with your preferred spine surgeon.

Will my doctor or nurse practitioner be informed about my assessment?

Your doctor or nurse practitioner will be sent a report about your assessment results. They will receive your self-management plan, next steps and any required follow-up appointments.

For some patients, the APP may contact your doctor or nurse practitioner directly to discuss your assessment.

How do I change or cancel my appointment?

If you need to cancel your appointment, please contact your APP's office 24 hours prior to your scheduled appointment. Their contact information will be provided to you at the time of your booking.

Need more information?

For any questions related to your first visit including directions, change to appointment time, etc. please contact your APP's office.

For general questions about the program, please contact the **Ontario Health (West) HNHB MSK CIAC at 1-888-868-5568.**