

DO I NEED AN X-RAY OR SCAN?

WHEN IT COMES TO JOINT AND MUSCLE ACHES AND PAINS, WHAT WE KNOW IS THAT:

X-rays or scans are NOT usually needed:

- to help diagnose the cause of your pain, or
- to help you manage your pain.



How your joint, muscles, tendons, ligaments, and nerves look on x-rays or scans won't help us to understand how much pain you feel, or how much you are able to do now or in the future.

In fact, x-rays and scans can be confusing as they often show things that are common in people WHO DO NOT HAVE pain, especially as we get older. This includes some things that can sound scary such as joint narrowing, tendon and cartilage tears, disc degeneration and disc bulges.

AN X-RAY OR SCAN MAY BE HELPFUL IN THESE LESS COMMON SITUATIONS:

If a serious injury such as a broken bone (fracture), ligament or tendon tear is suspected.

If a serious condition such as cancer or an infection is suspected.

If you experience weakness, pins and needles, numbness and pain in your leg(s) and/or arm(s) that is worsening and is significantly affecting your daily function.

If your symptoms or condition mean you might benefit from treatments such as an operation.



IN EACH OF THESE CASES, A HEALTH PROFESSIONAL (E.G. A GP OR PHYSIOTHERAPIST) CAN ASSESS YOU FULLY TO SEE IF YOU ARE LIKELY TO BENEFIT FROM AN X-RAY OR A SCAN.



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