

- Impaired balance or coordination
- Upper motor neuron findings (Babinski, Hoffman, clonus)
- Infection (weight loss, wounds, fever)
- Cancer (pain increased by rest, severe unrelenting night pain, weight loss)
- Signs of trauma

About Yellow Flags

History

- Oswestry score
- High fear/avoidance issues
- Frequent job changes
- Expression of severe job dissatisfaction
- Substance abuse
- Physical or sexual abuse
- Attorney retained

Physical Examination

- Waddell signs

Imaging indications

- Fracture
- Infection
- Cancer

Tips on Following Spine Protocol

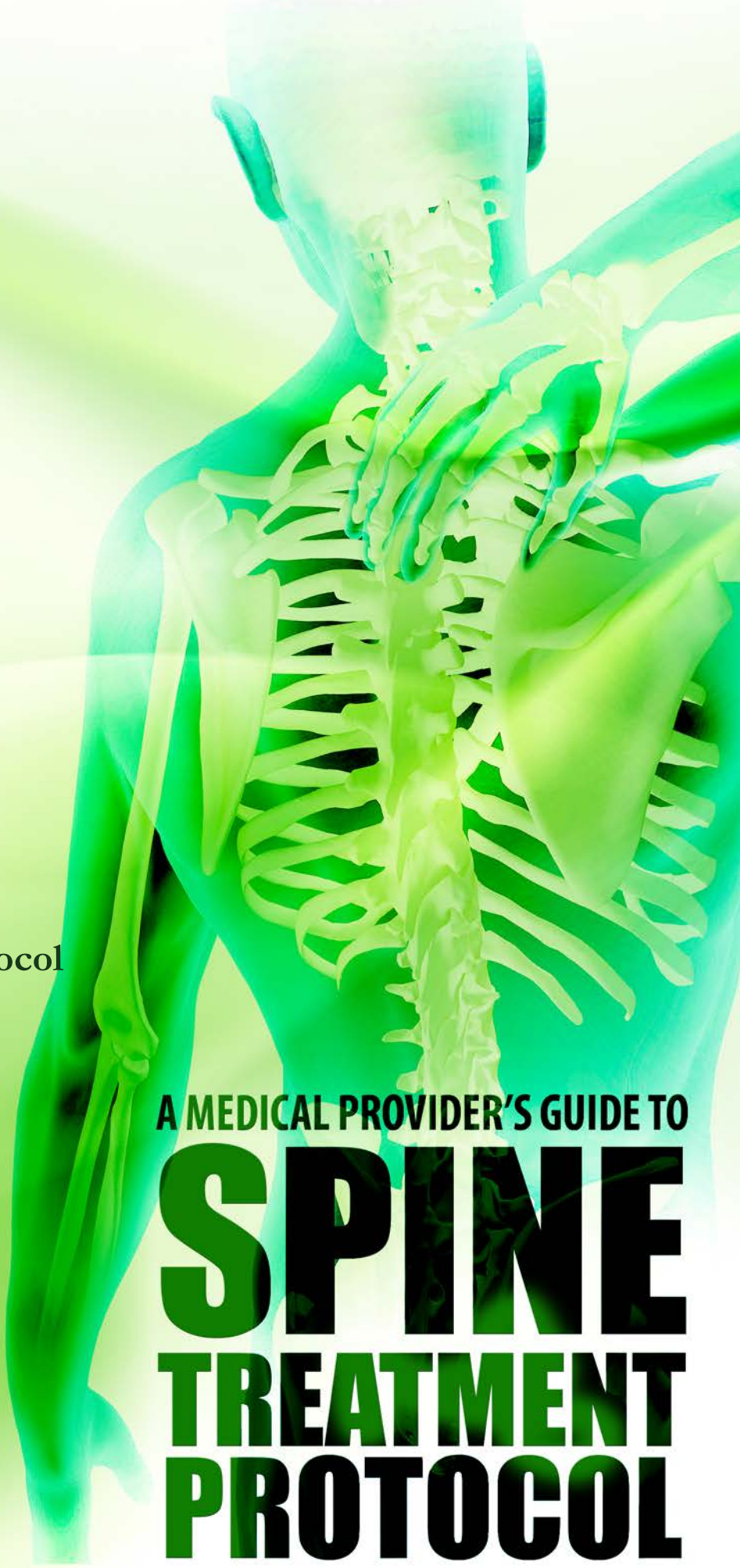
- Use the most up-to-date forms.
- Claim must be work-related spine injury - cervical, thoracic or lumbar spine.
- Initial contact must be within 48 hours of occurrence.
- Follow generally accepted Treatment Guidelines during the first six weeks following the injury.
- Visit wyomingworkforce.org for guidelines, flags and forms.



Wyoming Department of Workforce Services
Division of Workers' Compensation
(307) 777-5476; wyomingworkforce.org

A MEDICAL PROVIDER'S GUIDE TO

SPINE TREATMENT PROTOCOL



About the Spine Protocol

The purpose of the Spine Treatment Protocol is to follow recommended guidelines endorsed by primary and speciality groups in the fields of spine medicine. This program was developed by the Wyoming Initiative for Medical Evaluation and Treatment study. The study compared differences between consensus-based medical guidelines and evidence-based medical guidelines.

The study concludes use of evidence-based guidelines resulted in an overall better outcome for patients as it relates to best practice and time and resource allocation.

Who Can Participate?

Wyoming State Statute 27-14-102(a)(x) defines "Health care provider" as a doctor of medicine, chiropractic or osteopathy, dentist, optometrist, podiatrist, psychologist or advanced practitioner of nursing, acting within the scope of his or her license, licensed to practice in this state or in good standing in his or her home state.

Incentives are available for medical providers, injured workers and employers enrolled in the protocol.

The Spine Treatment Care Plan

All Patients - History, Physical Examination and Oswestry

- If **Red Flags**: consider laboratory studies, imaging or other diagnostic test as appropriate. Make referral to surgeon if needed.
- If **Yellow Flags**: consider referral to non-surgical specialist.
- If **Neurogenic Signs**: consider referral to non-surgical specialist.

All patients without Flags or Neurogenic Signs are categorized as Non-Specific Pain

- Provide medication, education and reassurance.
- Encourage activity and return to work with appropriate restrictions as soon as possible.
- Consider referral to physical therapy for education and exercise instruction.



For more information on the Spine Treatment Protocol, call 307-777-5476 or email at dws-askmewc@wyo.gov.

- Document any flags or signs that may indicate the pain is no longer non-specific.
- Imaging is not indicated for patients with non-specific back or neck pain in the first four to six weeks.

All patients with persistent (beyond six weeks) Non-Specific Pain

- Consider referral to non-surgical specialist.

About Red Flags

History

- Suspicion of fracture including osteoporosis
- High velocity or blunt trauma
- Suspicion of infection including IV drug use
- Suspicion of cancer with high risk of metastasis

Physical Examination

- Perineal/saddle numbness
- Bowel or bladder retention or incontinence
- Progressive motor or sensory loss
- Loss of anal sphincter tone

