



# PROVIDER PLAYBOOK

## PET Scans for Oncology



eviCore wants to collaborate with providers to ensure your patients receive high-quality, medically appropriate care when and where they need it. Our Provider Playbook series is designed to help achieve that goal by looking at some of the most common inappropriately ordered tests we see and providing information from current evidence-based medical literature to support the delivery of the right care every time.

### THE CHALLENGE: DETERMINING IF A PET SCAN IS BEST

PET scans are often requested by providers in oncology settings when the most appropriate imaging test for assessing the patient's condition may be an MRI or a CT scan.

### WHEN IS PET IMAGING APPROPRIATE IN ONCOLOGY?

Most of the time, a PET scan is used to answer a question that a CT scan or MRI cannot answer, or if the findings of other imaging tests are inconclusive. Typically, medical guidelines support the use of a CT scan or MRI as the initial procedure(s).

eviCore's medical guidelines for PET scan imaging in oncology are in alignment with the National Comprehensive Cancer Network's Imaging Appropriate Use Criteria. You can view the NCCN Imaging Appropriate Use Criteria here: <https://www.nccn.org/professionals/imaging/default.aspx>

### RADIOTRACERS

Recently, new radiotracers have been introduced. Generally speaking, unless there is a very specific indication for a new radiotracer, these are not appropriate. They are considered to be investigational and experimental due to a lack of evidence and/or national guidelines supporting their medical necessity.

### WHEN TREATING MEDICARE ADVANTAGE PATIENTS

eviCore is required to follow the National Coverage Determinations (NCDs) when considering PET scans for Medicare Advantage patients. Under these guidelines, PET scans are not covered for surveillance of the disease. Additionally, many Medicare Advantage plans limit the total number of PET scans used for restaging, depending on the type of cancer. For more information see: <https://www.cms.gov/medicare-coverage-database/details/ncd-details.aspx?ncdid=331>

### INFORMATION TO SHARE WITH PATIENTS

What you should know about PET scans after cancer treatment: "PET scans usually don't help people who have completed cancer treatments and don't have symptoms." <http://www.choosingwisely.org/patient-resources/pet-scans-after-cancer-treatment/>

Learn more about what a PET scan is and how to prepare for it: <https://my.clevelandclinic.org/health/diagnostics/10123-pet-scan>

Identifying when PET scans are the most appropriate imaging procedure is one area where eviCore seeks to partner with you to ensure your patients receive high-quality, medically appropriate care when and where they need it.

Learn more about eviCore's purpose and commitment to a partnership with providers at <https://www.evicore.com/insights>.





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Patient's Presentation	PET Scan Appropriateness
A CT scan or MRI was used first and the findings were inconclusive	●
To determine a more favorable site to biopsy when a prior biopsy was non-diagnostic in a patient with suspicion for malignancy	●
Cardiac PET may be indicated in selected cardiac conditions (such as to determine myocardial viability and to identify or monitor response to therapy for established or strongly suspected cardiac sarcoidosis)	●
No pathologically established diagnosis of cancer	●
Ordering concurrently with a diagnostic CT scan (Note: A PET scan may be appropriate following a diagnostic CT, but never at the same time as one)	●
Lesions are less than 8 millimeters in size (Note: The resolution of a PET scan is not adequate to support its use for very small lesions)	●
The consideration is a non-malignant disease, including infection, inflammation, trauma, post-operative healing, granulomatous disease, and rheumatologic conditions outside the heart	●
Surveillance of cancer following treatment to see if cancer has recurred (Note: Depending on the type of cancer, a CT scan or MRI may be medically appropriate. However, in some cases, imaging (including a PET scan) is not necessary at all.)	●
Evaluation of metastatic disease in the central nervous system	●
Patient has been diagnosed with a rare malignancy (Note: This is due to the lack of available evidence regarding the diagnostic accuracy of PET scans in the majority of rare cancers)	●
Mammography (Note: PET mammography is considered experimental and investigational at this time)	●

