



CLINICAL GUIDELINES

Peripheral Nerve Disorder (PND) Imaging Guidelines

Version 1.0.2024

Effective February 01, 2024



eviCore healthcare Clinical Decision Support Tool Diagnostic Strategies: This tool addresses common symptoms and symptom complexes. Imaging requests for individuals with atypical symptoms or clinical presentations that are not specifically addressed will require physician review. Consultation with the referring physician, specialist and/or individual's Primary Care Physician (PCP) may provide additional insight.

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General Guidelines (PN-1)

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Abbreviations for Peripheral Nerve Disorders Imaging Guidelines

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Abbreviations for Peripheral Nerve Disorders Imaging Guidelines	
AIDS	Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
ALS	Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis
CIDP	Chronic Inflammatory Demyelinating Polyneuropathy
CNS	central nervous system
CPK	creatinine phosphokinase
CT	computed tomography
EMG	electromyogram
LEMS	Lambert-Eaton Myasthenic Syndrome
MG	myasthenia gravis
MRI	magnetic resonance imaging
MRN	magnetic resonance neurography
MRS	magnetic resonance spectroscopy
NCV	nerve conduction velocity
PET	positron emission tomography
PNS	peripheral nervous system
PNST	Peripheral Nerve Sheath Tumor
POEMS	Polyneuropathy, Organomegaly, Endocrinopathy, M-protein, Skin changes
TOS	Thoracic Outlet Syndrome

General Guidelines (PN-1.0)

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- A pertinent clinical evaluation is required before advanced imaging can be considered. The clinical evaluation should include a pertinent history and physical examination, including a neurological examination, (since the onset or change in symptoms), appropriate laboratory studies, non-advanced imaging modalities, and electromyography/nerve conduction (EMG/NCV) studies. Other meaningful technological contact (telehealth visit, telephone call or video call, electronic mail or messaging) since the onset or change in symptoms, by an established individual can serve as a pertinent clinical evaluation.
- Nerve conduction studies are often normal early in the disease course with changes occurring from one to four weeks after symptom onset in the majority of individuals. This will be taken into consideration on a case-by-case basis in regards to the EMG/NCV requirement in each section requirement of **Peripheral Nerve Disorders (PND) Imaging Guidelines**.
- During the current COVID-19 pandemic, with limited face-to-face visits, the electrodiagnostic (EMG/NCV) study requirements may be waived with necessity to be determined by the treating neurologist or team coordinating the individual's care.
- If imaging of peripheral nerves is indicated, ultrasound is the preferred modality for superficial peripheral nerves. MRI may be used for imaging deep nerves such as the lumbosacral plexus or nerves obscured by overlying bone such as the brachial plexus or for surgical planning. CT is limited to cases in which MRI is contraindicated.

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Focal Neuropathy (PN-2)

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Focal Neuropathy (PN-2.1)

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Focal Disorder	EMG/NCV Initially?	Advanced Imaging
Carpal Tunnel Syndrome	YES	- When EMG/NCV and clinical findings are equivocal AND only when requested for pre-operative planning, MRI Wrist without contrast (CPT® 73221) is indicated. - See Neck (Cervical Spine) Pain Without/With Neurological Features (Including Stenosis) and Trauma (SP-3) in the Spine Imaging Guidelines.
Ulnar Neuropathy	YES	After EMG/NCV, only ONE of the following is indicated if requested for surgical consideration: - MRI Upper Extremity Joint (Elbow or Wrist) without contrast (CPT® 73221), OR - MRI Upper Extremity Non Joint (Forearm or Hand) without contrast (CPT® 73218)
Radial Neuropathy	YES	- MRI Upper Arm or Forearm without contrast (CPT® 73218) in severe cases when surgery is being considered. - MRI Upper Arm or Forearm without and with contrast (CPT® 73220) if there is a suspicion of a nerve tumor such as a neuroma.

Radial Neuropathy Notes: Leads to wrist drop with common sites of entrapment the inferior aspect of the humerus (Saturday night palsy) or the forearm (Posterior Interosseous Syndrome). Entrapment of the nerve at the wrist (Wartenberg syndrome or handcuff palsy) typically spares motor involvement and results only in sensory changes.

Trauma or fractures of the humerus, radius, or ulna can damage the radial nerve.

Focal Disorder	EMG/NCV Initially?	Advanced Imaging
Pudendal Neuropathy ⁽⁷⁻¹²⁾	NO	• Documented concern specifically for pudendal neuropathy, pudendal neuralgia, or pudendal entrapment: MRI Pelvis without contrast (CPT® 72195) OR MRI Pelvis without and with contrast (CPT® 72197) • If there is a contraindication to MRI and the above documented concern is present, then ONE of the following is indicated: • CT Pelvis without contrast (CPT® 72192) • CT Pelvis with contrast (CPT® 72193) • CT Pelvis without and with contrast (CPT® 72194) • For all other pelvic concerns, see the following Pelvic Imaging Guidelines (as indicated): • <u>Pelvic Pain/Dyspareunia Female (PV-11.1)</u> • <u>Impotence/Erectile Dysfunction (PV-17.1)</u> • <u>Male Pelvic Disorders (PV-19.1)</u> • <u>Scrotal Pathology (PV-20.1)</u>
Pudendal Neuropathy Notes: Causes pain, sexual dysfunction, or sensory change in the genitals, perineum, and perianal region. May be caused from trauma, recurrent injury from exercise such as cycling, pelvic mass, or after viral infection (e.g., post-herpetic neuralgia).		
Sciatic Neuropathy	YES	• MRI Pelvis without contrast (CPT® 72195) • CT Pelvis without contrast (CPT® 72192) is NOT routinely indicated due to lack of soft tissue contrast. • It should only be performed in the rare circumstance of contrast allergy and/or contraindication to MRI such as pacemaking device.

Focal Disorder	EMG/NCV Initially?	Advanced Imaging
Sciatic Neuropathy Notes: May be caused by trauma to the gluteal area with hematoma, injection palsy, hip or pelvic fractures, or hip replacement (arthroplasty). Piriformis Syndrome involves entrapment of the sciatic nerve at the sciatic notch in the pelvis by a tight piriformis muscle band.		
Femoral Neuropathy	NO	MRI Pelvis without contrast (CPT® 72195)
Femoral Neuropathy Notes: May occur as a complication of pelvic surgery in females or those on anticoagulants with retroperitoneal bleeding, or as a mononeuropathy in diabetics		
Meralgia Paresthetica	NO	- MRI Pelvis without contrast (CPT® 72195) is indicated for ANY of the following scenarios: - Cases of diagnostic uncertainty - Pre-operative - CT Pelvis without contrast (CPT® 72192) is NOT routinely indicated due to lack of soft tissue contrast. - It should only be performed in the rare circumstance of contrast allergy and/or contraindication to MRI such as pacemaking device.
Meralgia Paresthetica Notes: Sensory loss in the lateral femoral cutaneous nerve as it exits the pelvis under the inguinal ligament (lateral thigh without extension into lower leg), and is usually easily diagnosed based on a careful history and physical exam. EMG/NCV testing is often technically difficult and not required.		
Peroneal Neuropathy	YES	MRI Knee without contrast (CPT® 73721) OR MRI Lower Extremity other than joint without contrast (CPT® 73718) in severe cases when surgery is considered.
Tarsal Tunnel Syndrome	N/A	See Foot (Tarsal Tunnel Syndrome) (MS-27) in the Musculoskeletal Imaging Guidelines.

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Polyneuropathy (PN-3)

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Polyneuropathy (PN-3.1)

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Poly-Disorder	EMG/NCV Initially?	Advanced Imaging	Comments
Polyneuropathies with Central Nervous System (CNS) Involvement	YES	If clinical findings point to abnormalities in those areas, then ANY of the following are indicated: • MRI Brain without and with contrast (CPT® 70553), AND/OR • MRI Cervical Spine without and with contrast (CPT® 72156), AND/OR • MRI Thoracic Spine without and with contrast (CPT® 72157)	Examples: Guillain-Barré syndrome and Lyme disease

Poly-Disorder	EMG/NCV Initially?	Advanced Imaging	Comments
AIDS-Related Cytomegaloviral Neuropathy/Radiculopathy ¹	YES	- MRI Lumbar Spine without and with contrast (CPT® 72158) - If concern for myelopathy, ANY of the following imaging are ALSO indicated: - MRI Cervical Spine without and with contrast (CPT® 72156), AND/OR - MRI Thoracic Spine without and with contrast (CPT® 72157)	- Urinary retention and a clinically confusing picture in the legs. - For myelopathic signs and symptoms, see <u>Myelopathy (SP-7.1)</u>.
Chronic Inflammatory Demyelinating Polyneuropathy (CIDP)	YES	MRI Lumbar Spine without and with contrast (CPT® 72158) if uncertain following EMG/NCV. See <u>Brachial Plexus (PN-4.1)</u>, <u>Lumbar and Lumbosacral Plexus (PN-5.1)</u>, and <u>Muscle Diseases (PN-6.2)</u>	

Poly-Disorder	EMG/NCV Initially?	Advanced Imaging	Comments
Multifocal Motor Neuropathy	YES	If diagnosis is uncertain following EMG/NCV, MRI of the Brachial Plexus is supported with ONE of the following: • MRI Upper Extremity other than joint without and with contrast (CPT® 73220) • MRI Chest without and with contrast (CPT® 71552) • MRI Neck without and with contrast (CPT® 70543)	
POEMS (Polyneuropathy, Organomegaly, Endocrinopathy, M-protein, Skin changes)	YES	Advanced imaging is for the non-neurological etiologies of this rare osteosclerotic plasmacytoma syndrome.	See Multiple Myeloma and Plasmacytomas (ONC-25) in the Oncology Imaging Guidelines.
Subacute Sensory Neuronopathy & Other Paraneoplastic Demyelinating Neuropathies	YES	• Advanced imaging should be guided by specific clinical concern (see relevant guideline). • For evaluation of suspected paraneoplastic syndromes, see Paraneoplastic Syndromes (ONC-30.3) in the Oncology Imaging Guidelines.	

Background and Supporting Information

- Central Nervous System (CNS) Imaging (Brain and Spine) is not required for Polyneuropathy without CNS signs/symptoms.⁶
- Distal symmetric polyneuropathy is the most common pattern of generalized peripheral neuropathy. It is typically sensory predominant and may demonstrate neurological abnormalities including reduced or absent deep tendon reflexes (DTRs), reduced sensation to multiple testing modalities (vibration, proprioception, etc). In more advanced staging, mild motor weakness may be present. It is most often associated with diabetes and metabolic abnormalities. In the absence of atypical findings (such as asymmetrical presentation, significant weakness, or upper motor neuron exam findings such as hyperreflexia or spasticity), distal symmetric polyneuropathy does not require central nervous system (CNS) imaging.⁶

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Brachial Plexus (PN-4)

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Brachial Plexus (PN-4.1)

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- EMG/NCV examination is required prior to advanced imaging except in cases of malignant infiltration or radiation plexitis as detailed below.⁸⁻¹²

Brachial Plexus Imaging		
Indication	Imaging	Notes
Malignant infiltration (EMG Not required)	Any ONE of the following: - MRI Upper Extremity other than joint without contrast (CPT® 73218) - MRI Upper Extremity other than joint without and with contrast (CPT® 73220) - MRI Chest without contrast (CPT® 71550) - MRI Chest without and with contrast (CPT® 71552) - MRI Neck without contrast (CPT® 70540) - MRI Neck without and with contrast (CPT® 70543)	
Radiation plexitis to rule out malignant infiltration (EMG not required)		
Neurogenic Thoracic Outlet Syndrome (TOS)¹⁰		
Preoperative work up requiring evaluation of the brachial plexus		
Brachial plexitis (Parsonage-Turner Syndrome or painful brachial amyotrophy)	• Any ONE of the above <u>studies</u> AND • If concern for radiculopathy, MRI Cervical Spine without contrast (CPT® 72141)	• For concern for cervical radiculopathy, see <u>Neck (Cervical Spine) Pain Without/With Neurological Features (Including Stenosis) and Trauma (SP-3)</u> • For details of brachial plexitis (Parsonage-Turner Syndrome), see <u>Background and Supporting Information.</u>
Traumatic injury¹³		

MRI Chest and Neck are inherently bilateral, whereas MRI Upper Extremity is unilateral.

- If MRI is not available or is contraindicated, CT offers the next highest level of anatomic visualization and can characterize local osseous or vascular anatomy and injury. In this circumstance, when the above criteria are met, only **ONE** of the following studies is indicated:
 - CT Neck Soft Tissue:** CT Neck without contrast (CPT® 70490); **or**, CT Neck with contrast (CPT® 70491); **or**, CT Neck without and with contrast (CPT® 70492)

- **CT Upper Extremity:** CT Upper Extremity without contrast (CPT® 73200); **or**, CT Upper Extremity with contrast (CPT® 73201); **or**, CT Upper Extremity without and with contrast (CPT® 73202)
- **CT Chest:** CT Chest without contrast (CPT® 71250); **or**, CT Chest with contrast (CPT® 71260); **or**, CT Chest without and with contrast (CPT® 71270)
- MRI should be performed prior to consideration of PET imaging.
 - For PET imaging, see **PET Imaging in Oncology (ONC-1.4)** in the Oncology Imaging Guidelines.

Background and Supporting Information

- Brachial plexitis (Parsonage-Turner syndrome or painful brachial amyotrophy) is a self-limited syndrome characterized by initial shoulder region pain followed by weakness of specific muscles in a pattern which does not conform to involvement of a single root or distal peripheral nerve.

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Lumbar and Lumbosacral Plexus (PN-5)

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Lumbar and Lumbosacral Plexus (PN-5.1)

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- EMG/NCV examination is required prior to advanced imaging.
 - EMG/NCV is **NOT** required if there is concern for malignant infiltration.
- For suspected lumbar and/or lumbosacral plexopathy, **ONE** of the following is indicated
 - MRI Pelvis without contrast (CPT® 72195) with fat suppression imaging, **OR**
 - MRI Pelvis without and with contrast (CPT® 72197) with fat suppression imaging, **OR**
 - MRI Abdomen without contrast (CPT® 74181) and MRI Pelvis without contrast (CPT® 72195) with fat suppression imaging, **OR**
 - MRI Abdomen without and with contrast (CPT® 74183) and MRI Pelvis without and with contrast (CPT® 72197) with fat suppression imaging
- If MRI is not available or is contraindicated, CT offers the next highest level of anatomic visualization and can characterize local osseous or vascular anatomy and injury. In this circumstance, when requested for suspected lumbar and/or lumbosacral plexopathy, **EITHER** of the following is indicated:
 - CT Pelvis with contrast (CPT® 72193), **OR**
 - CT Abdomen and Pelvis with contrast (CPT® 74177)
- If suspected lumbar and/or lumbosacral plexopathy is due to a traumatic injury, then MRI Lumbar Spine without contrast (CPT® 72148) is **ALSO** indicated.
 - See **Low Back (Lumbar Spine) Trauma (SP 6.2)**
- For PET imaging, see **PET Imaging in Oncology (ONC-1.4)** in the Oncology Imaging Guidelines.
 - However, EMG is not needed if concern for malignant infiltration
 - If MRI is contraindicated, CT offers the next highest level of anatomic visualization and can characterize local osseous or vascular anatomy and injury.

Background and Supporting Information

- Lumbar and lumbosacral plexopathy may be caused by any of the following:
 - Malignant infiltration
 - Radiation
 - Traumatic injury
 - Inflammation including sarcoidosis and infection
 - Toxic including iatrogenic during delivery (obstetric) or related to nerve blocks (ex. Botox®)
 - Metabolic including etiologies including diabetes

References (PN-5)

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Muscle Disorders (PN-6)

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Neuromuscular Junction Disorders (PN-6.1)

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Myasthenia Gravis (MG)

Myasthenia Gravis (MG) is associated with thymic disease.

- After an established diagnosis of MG or when MG is suspected by a neurologist, rheumatologist, or ophthalmologist, ONE of the following is indicated^{1,4}:
 - CT Chest with contrast (CPT® 71260), **OR**
 - CT Chest without contrast (CPT® 71250), **OR**
 - MRI Chest without and with contrast (CPT® 71552), **OR**
 - MRI Chest without contrast (CPT® 71550)
- Repeat of **ANY ONE** of the above imaging studies is indicated if the initial imaging study was negative for **ANY** of the following scenarios:
 - Symptoms of chest mass
 - Rising anti-striated muscle antibody titers
 - Need for pre-operative evaluation (clinical presentation, electro-diagnostic studies, and antibody titers)

Lambert–Eaton Myasthenic Syndrome (LEMS)

Lambert–Eaton Myasthenic Syndrome (LEMS) is associated with malignancies, especially small cell lung cancer.

- For a suspected diagnosis, **ANY** of the following are indicated: CT Chest with contrast (CPT® 71260) **AND/OR** CT Abdomen and Pelvis with contrast (CPT® 74177)^{5,6}
 - See **Paraneoplastic Syndromes (ONC-30.3)**
- If initial CT was negative and there is persistent suspicion, **ANY** of the above imaging studies are indicated every 6 months for 2 years from date of initial negative imaging.²⁷

Stiff-Person Syndrome

Stiff-person syndrome is associated with cancers such as, but not limited to, small cell lung cancer, pancreatic neuroendocrine cancer, and breast cancer.^{7,8}

- If Stiff-person syndrome is suspected based on clinical findings, **ANY** of the following are indicated:
 - **Abdomen/Pelvis:** CT Abdomen and Pelvis with contrast (CPT® 74177) **or** CT Abdomen and Pelvis without and with contrast (CPT® 74178); **OR**, MRI Abdomen without and with contrast (CPT® 74183) **and** MRI Pelvis without and with contrast (CPT® 72197)
 - **Chest:** CT Chest with contrast (CPT® 71260) **or** CT Chest without contrast (CPT® 71250)
 - **Symptomatic Body Areas:** CT with contrast **or** MRI without and with contrast of any other symptomatic body areas

Background and Supporting Information

- Myasthenia gravis is an autoimmune disease of the neuromuscular junctions, manifested by fatigable weakness of the cranial nerves (examples - ocular: ptosis, diplopia; bulbar: dysphagia, dysarthria, dysphonia), as well as generalized limb weakness, depending on the severity of the disease. Associated antibodies: acetylcholine receptor (AChR), muscle specific kinase (MuSK).
- Lambert Eaton Myasthenic Syndrome (LEMS) is also an autoimmune disease affecting the neuromuscular junction presenting with ocular and bulbar symptoms and proximal limb weakness. Associated antibodies: P/Q voltage-gated calcium channel (VGCC).
- LEMS can occur as a paraneoplastic syndrome associated with malignancy (cancer-associated LEMS) or as an autoimmune phenomenon in the absence of malignancy (non-tumor LEMS). Between 50% and 60% of all LEMS cases are associated with malignancy, particularly small cell lung carcinoma (SCLC), although LEMS has been described in individuals with non–small cell and mixed-cell lung carcinomas, neuroendocrine tumors such as prostate cancer, thymoma, and lymphoproliferative disorders.⁵
- Stiff-person syndrome is an autoimmune disease associated with muscle spasm and muscle rigidity affecting the trunk and limb muscles. Associated antibodies: Glutamic acid decarboxylase (GAD).

Muscle Diseases (PN-6.2)

PN.MD.0006.2.A

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- MRI may be helpful in demonstrating abnormalities in muscles that are difficult to examine or not clinically weak and can help distinguish between different types of muscle disease. MRI is also useful in determining sites for muscle biopsy.

Imaging for Muscle Disease		
Disease	Indication	Indication Imaging
Any Known or Suspected Muscle Disease	To plan muscle biopsy	Typically an affected muscle is imaged.
Myopathy or Myositis	Additional evaluation <u>after</u> clinical exam, EMG/NCV, OR labs	• Upper Extremity: MRI Upper Extremity other than joint without contrast (CPT® 73218); OR, MRI Upper Extremity other than joint without and with contrast (CPT® 73220)*
Inflammatory Muscle Diseases • Dermatomyositis • Polymyositis • Inclusion body myositis	• Evaluation of differential diagnosis • Selection of biopsy site • Clinical concern for progression • Treatment monitoring • Detection of occult malignancy	AND/OR • Lower Extremity: MRI Lower Extremity other than joint without contrast (CPT® 73718); OR, MRI Lower Extremity other than joint without and with contrast (CPT® 73720)* * When indication column criteria are met, bilateral studies are supported if requested

For interstitial lung disease associated with inflammatory myopathies, see

Interstitial Lung Disease (ILD)/Diffuse Lung Disease (DLD) (CH-11.1)

in the Chest Imaging Guidelines.

- For dermatomyositis and polymyositis with concern for occult neoplasm, see **Paraneoplastic Syndromes (ONC-30.3)** in the Oncology Imaging Guidelines.

Gaucher Disease (Storage Disorders) (PN-6.3)

PN.MD.0006.3.A

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Imaging for Gaucher Disease
Initial Imaging
• MRI Lumbar Spine without contrast (CPT® 72148) • Bilateral femurs with MRI Lower Extremity, other than joint, without contrast (CPT® 73718) • MRI Abdomen without contrast (CPT® 74181) • DXA scan • CT Chest without contrast (CPT® 71250) for individuals with new or worsening pulmonary symptoms
Every 12 months
• To assess treatment response for individuals on enzyme replacement therapy or assess disease progression for individuals in surveillance • MRI Lumbar Spine without contrast (CPT® 72148) • Bilateral femurs with MRI Lower Extremity, other than joint, without contrast (CPT® 73718) • MRI Abdomen without contrast (CPT® 74181) • CT Chest without contrast (CPT® 71250) for individuals with documented pulmonary involvement
New or worsening pulmonary symptoms
• CT Chest without contrast (CPT® 71250)
DXA scans
• Every 12-24 months until it is normal • Enzyme replacement therapy dose change • Every 3 years
Acute bone pain
• X-ray • MRI of affected areas with and without contrast if x-ray is non-diagnostic or indicates the need for further imaging, such as equivocal for osteonecrosis, infection, or malignancy

- PET/CT imaging is considered **investigational** in the evaluation of Gaucher disease. ¹⁸F-FDG does not reliably detect Gaucher disease in the marrow, and other isotopes are not yet FDA-approved for clinical use.

Background and Supporting Information

- Gaucher disease is group of autosomal recessive inborn errors of metabolism characterized by lack of the enzyme acid β -glucuronidase with destructive ceramide storage in various tissues. Gaucher disease is a treatable disorder (enzyme replacement) in which the liver, spleen, and bone marrow/bones are the most affected organs. Diagnosis is established by decreased enzyme activity or genetic testing.
- Three major types of Gaucher disease are recognized:
 - **Type I** (non-neuropathic form or adult form): progressive hepatomegaly, splenomegaly, anemia and thrombocytopenia, and marked skeletal involvement; lungs and kidneys may also be involved, but central nervous system is spared
 - **Type II** (acute neuropathic form or infantile form): severe progressive neurological involvement and death by 2 to 4 years of age; hepatomegaly, splenomegaly, is also present (usually evident by 6 months of age)
 - **Type III**: type I with neurological involvement and slowly progressive disease. Onset may be present before two years of age with survival to the third or fourth decade of life.
- Additionally, there is a perinatal-lethal and a cardiovascular form. The cardiovascular form involves the heart, spleen and eyes. Note that cardiopulmonary complications may be present, with varying frequency and severity, in all subtypes.
- Individuals with Gaucher disease are at risk for osteonecrosis, osteomyelitis, and bony tumors

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Magnetic Resonance Neurography (MRN) (PN-7)

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Magnetic Resonance Neurography (MRN) (PN-7.1)

PN.MR.0007.1.A

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- MRN is supported when **ALL** of the following criteria are met:
 - The study is to evaluate a traumatic or compressive focal neuropathy or a brachial plexus injury.
 - The study is requested by a neurosurgeon, orthopedic surgeon, neurologist, or podiatrist after an in-person clinical evaluation **AND** when surgery is being considered.
 - EMG/NCV has been performed and results provided.
 - The diagnosis remains unclear following prior imaging of the region with x-ray, ultrasound, or conventional imaging (CT or MRI).
 - For conventional imaging criteria, see **Focal Neuropathy (PN-2.1)** and **Brachial Plexus (PN-4.1)**.
- MRN is reported as **ONE** of the following:
 - Unlisted MRI procedure code (CPT® 76498), **OR**
 - MRI extremity with **ONE** of the following codes:
 - MRI Upper Extremity, other than joint, without contrast (CPT® 73218)
 - MRI Upper Extremity, other than joint, without and with contrast (CPT® 73220)
 - MRI Lower Extremity, other than joint, without contrast (CPT® 73718)
 - MRI Lower Extremity, other than joint, without and with contrast (CPT® 73720)
- MRN for **ANY** other indication is considered **NOT medically necessary** at this time, including for assessment of lumbosacral plexopathy, neuromuscular disease, and polyneuropathy.

Background and Supporting Information

Magnetic resonance neurography utilizes standard MRI equipment with sequences and technology that allow for optimized viewing of the peripheral nerve. MRN creates greater contrast between the nerve and other surrounding soft tissue to allow a detailed view of the nerve tissue and layers. This allows for more accurate diagnosis of the location and degree of nerve injury.

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Neuromuscular Disorders (PN-8)

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Motor Neuron Disease/Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS) (PN-8.1)

PN.ND.0008.1.A

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- A neurological examination is **NOT** required for an individual with established diagnosis of motor neuron disease/ALS **or** when diagnosis is suspected by a neurologist, geneticist, or a physical medicine and rehabilitation (PM&R) specialist.
- For initial evaluation of suspected motor neuron disease/ALS, **ANY** of the following are indicated
 - **Brain:** MRI Brain without contrast (CPT® 70551) **or** MRI Brain without and with contrast (CPT® 70553), **AND/OR**
 - **Cervical Spine:** MRI Cervical Spine without contrast (CPT® 72141) **or** MRI Cervical Spine without and with contrast (CPT® 72156), **AND/OR**
 - **Thoracic Spine:** MRI Thoracic Spine without contrast (CPT® 72146) **or** MRI Thoracic Spine without and with contrast (CPT® 72157), **AND/OR**
 - **Lumbar Spine:** MRI Lumbar Spine without contrast (CPT® 72148) **or** MRI Lumbar Spine without and with contrast (CPT® 72158)
- Repeat imaging can be evaluated based on the appropriate **Spine Imaging Guidelines**.

Background and Supporting Information

- Evidence of lower motor neuron dysfunction in a muscle may include clinical examination of muscle weakness/wasting or EMG abnormalities to meet the criteria for the diagnosis of ALS.
- Motor Neuron Diseases (also known as Anterior Horn Cell Diseases) are heterogeneous and encompass either upper motor neurons, or lower motor neurons, or both. Upper motor neurons begin in the cerebral cortex and descend into the brainstem (corticobulbar), or spinal cord, where there is a connection to the lower motor neuron that exits the central nervous system and reaches out to the muscle.
 - The various types can be divided into the areas so affected:
 - Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (Lou Gehrig's disease) – both Upper and Lower Motor Neurons
 - Primary Lateral Sclerosis – Upper Motor Neurons
 - Progressive Muscular Atrophy – Lower Motor Neurons
 - Progressive Bulbar Palsy – Rare and limited to bulbar muscles (muscles innervated by the Cranial Nerves – dysarthria and dysphagia)
 - Other rare conditions:
 - Monomelic Amyotrophy (Hirayama disease)
 - Spinal Bulbar Muscular Atrophy (Kennedy Disease)

- Signs of lower motor neuron pathology include weakness, fasciculations, atrophy, decreased muscle tone, decreased reflexes, and a plantar extensor response (Babinski sign).
- Signs of upper motor neuron pathology include weakness, increased muscle tone, increased reflexes, and a plantar flexor response.¹¹

Spinal Muscular Atrophy (PN-8.2)

PN.ND.0008.2.A

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- Molecular genetic testing is the standard tool for diagnosis for the early consideration in any infant with weakness or hypotonia.
 - MRI is **NOT** supported for diagnosis in children, unless other diseases are being considered. See **Spinal Muscular Atrophy (PEDPN-5.1)**.
- In individuals with adult-onset disease, the differential includes later-onset motor neuron disorders, such as ALS
 - For these conditions, advanced imaging is indicated when upper and lower motor neuron findings are present. For imaging, see **Motor Neuron Disease/Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS) (PN-8.1)**.

Fasciculations (PN-8.3)

PN.ND.0008.3.A

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Fasciculations are spontaneous, erratic movements of muscle that may be secondary to benign and non-benign etiologies.

- **ALL** of the following evaluations are required prior to advanced imaging:
 - **Clinical history** should include the time course of symptoms, any associated weakness, areas of involvement, as well as the presence or absence of pain, sensory loss, or sphincter dysfunction.
 - **EMG/NCV evaluation**
 - In the setting of clinical concern for radiculopathy, neuromuscular disorders, or muscle disorders, see the following imaging guidelines:
 - **Neuromuscular Junction Disorders (PN-6.1)**
 - **Muscle Diseases (PN-6.2)**
 - **Neck (Cervical Spine) Pain without and with Neurological Features (Including Stenosis) (SP-3.1)**
 - **Lower Extremity Pain with Neurological Features (Radiculopathy, Radiculitis, or Plexopathy and Neuropathy) with or without Low Back (Lumbar Spine) Pain (SP-6.1)**
 - **Laboratory evaluation** (e.g., complete blood count; comprehensive metabolic panel; serum calcium; thyroid function testing; vitamin B12 level; sed rate; ANA; rheumatoid factor; serum protein electrophoresis with immunofixation; Lyme testing; HIV testing; testing for heavy metals; etc.)
- For the presence of upper motor neuron signs (e.g. increased tone; hyperreflexia; presence of Babinski or Hoffman signs) to exclude mimics of non-benign etiologies of muscle fasciculations (i.e. motor neuron disease), **ANY** of the following CNS studies are indicated:
 - **Brain:** MRI Brain without contrast (CPT® 70551) **or** MRI Brain without and with contrast (CPT® 70553), **AND/OR**
 - **Cervical Spine:** MRI Cervical Spine without contrast (CPT® 72141) **or** MRI Cervical Spine without and with contrast (CPT® 72156), **AND/OR**
 - **Thoracic Spine:** MRI Thoracic Spine without contrast (CPT® 72146) **or** MRI Thoracic Spine without and with contrast (CPT® 72157)
- **Lumbar Spine:** Typically, lumbar spine imaging is **NOT** indicated unless there is sphincter involvement or there is a need to rule out lower motor etiologies in the lower extremities (e.g., lumbar radiculopathy). See the following Spine Imaging Guidelines:
 - **Red Flag Indications (SP-1.2)**
 - **Lower Extremity Pain with Neurological Features (Radiculopathy, Radiculitis, or Plexopathy and Neuropathy) with or without Low Back (Lumbar Spine) Pain (SP-6.1)**

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Peripheral Nerve Sheath Tumors (PNST) (PN-9)

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Peripheral Nerve Sheath Tumors (PNST) (PN-9.1)

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PNST such as (Schwannomas or Neurofibromas) arise from Schwann cells or other connective tissue of the nerve. They can be located anywhere in the body.

- When PNST is suspected, the following advanced imaging is indicated:
 - Vestibular Schwannoma: MRI Brain without and with contrast (CPT® 70553)
 - See **Acoustic Neuroma and Other Cerebellopontine Angle Tumors (HD-33.1)** in the Head Imaging Guidelines.
 - Suspected Paraspinal Neurofibroma: **ANY** of the following imaging:
 - MRI Cervical Spine without and with contrast (CPT® 72156), **AND/OR**
 - MRI Thoracic Spine without and with contrast (CPT® 72157), **AND/OR**
 - MRI Lumbar Spine without and with contrast (CPT® 72158)
- Routine follow-up imaging is **NOT** indicated except in the following scenarios:
 - New symptoms or neurological findings develop
 - Post-operatively for **ANY** of the following scenarios:
 - At the discretion of or in consultation with the surgeon;
 - If the tumor was not completely removed and the imaging is requested to re-establish baseline
 - Malignant transformation is known **or** suspected. **ANY** of the following imaging is indicated for metastatic work-up:
 - CT Chest with contrast (CPT® 71260), **AND/OR**
 - CT Abdomen with contrast (CPT® 74160)
- For guidelines related to known malignancies in individuals with NF1, see the appropriate imaging guideline for the specific cancer type.

Background and Supporting Information

- The role of PET imaging in Peripheral Nerve Sheath Tumors is not well established yet.⁸
- Malignant transformation may be present in approximately 5% of Peripheral Nerve Sheath Tumors.

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Nuclear Imaging (PN-10)

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Nuclear Imaging (PN-10.1)

PN.NI.0010.1.A

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- Nuclear Medicine
 - Nuclear medicine studies are **NOT** indicated in the evaluation of peripheral nerve disorders.