

Patient Guide to Rapid Access Clinics for Low Back Pain

About Rapid Access Clinics for Low Back Pain

Rapid Access Clinics for Low Back Pain are being implemented across the province to help improve the quality, access and appropriateness of low back care.

The clinic team will assess your low back condition in a timely way and work with you to create a personalized care plan to help you better manage your low back pain.

Rapid Access Clinics services are fully covered by the Ontario Health Insurance Plan (OHIP).

How do I get referred?

Your primary care provider, a family doctor or nurse practitioner, can refer you to a Rapid Access Clinic for an initial assessment of your low back pain and/or low back related leg pain, to determine the next steps in your care.

Referral into the program is only available to patients whose primary care provider has enrolled in the program. Please ask your primary care provider if they are participating in the program and whether or not you meet the program criteria.

Am I a candidate for this program?

The program is for patients who are over the age of 18 and have had low back pain and/or related leg symptoms (e.g., leg pain, numbness and/or tingling) for at least 6 weeks, but not longer than one year.

Patients with the following conditions are not candidates for the program:

- Long-standing low back conditions (greater than 12 months in a row of low back pain with no relief)
- Pain that is a result of an accident where the injury is covered under an insurance claim (for example, motor vehicle accident or workplace injury)
- Pregnant or within 12 months after childbirth
- Conditions that require urgent or emergency care

Please speak to your primary care provider who will be able to determine if your condition meets the program criteria.

How will my referral be handled?

Your assessment will be scheduled with the nearest available provider based on proximity to your home and availability.

After receiving your referral, the Advanced Practice Provider's office will contact you to book your appointment.

You can expect an appointment within four weeks.

How long is the assessment?

The initial assessment will be approximately one hour long. It is recommended that you arrive 15 minutes prior to your appointment to complete the necessary paperwork.

What happens during an assessment?

- You will be assessed by an Advanced Practice Provider with advanced skills and training in low back care. Advanced Practice Providers are regulated healthcare professionals such as physiotherapists, chiropractors, or nurse practitioners.
- The Advanced Practice Provider will ask you standardized questions about your condition and medical history and will perform a physical examination. You will be provided with an explanation as to the likely causes of your low back pain and/or low back related leg symptoms.

- The Advanced Practice Provider will work with you to create a personalized plan to help you better manage your low back pain, improve your mobility and improve your overall physical function. These evidence-informed self-management plans include advice on the importance of staying active as well as instruction on exercises and modified activities as needed.
- While the Advanced Practice Provider will not provide you with treatment (e.g., supervised therapeutic exercises or hands-on therapy), they will educate you on your condition and may recommend additional treatment options to support your self-management plan. These additional recommended options will be evidence informed and should be available from community providers.

What if I need surgery or additional tests?

- Surgery may be indicated for some patients. If you are considered a potential surgical candidate, you will be provided with access to spine specialists and diagnostic imaging (X-ray, MRI) as required.
- If you require a consultation with a surgeon, you will be referred for an appointment with the next available surgeon or with your preferred surgeon.

Will my primary care provider be informed about my assessment?

Your primary care provider will receive a consultation note that summarizes the results of your assessment, self-management plan, next steps and any required follow-up appointments.

The Advanced Practice Provider may contact your primary care provider directly to discuss your assessment results if required.

What do I need to do before my appointment?

To optimize your time with your Advanced Practice Provider, please download and complete the [Patient Intake Form](#) prior to your first appointment at www.isaec.org. If needed, a paper copy will also be made available for you when you arrive at your appointment. Please arrive 15 minutes prior to your appointment to complete the necessary paperwork.

How do I change or cancel my appointment?

If you need to change or cancel your appointment, please contact your Advanced Practice Provider's office 24 hours before your scheduled appointment. The contact information will be provided to you at the time of your booking.

What if English or French is not my primary language?

To best help you, it is important that the Advanced Practice Provider clearly understands your condition. If English or French are not your primary language, please consider bringing a friend or a family member to your appointment who can translate on your behalf.

Need more information?

For all inquiries related to your first visit including directions, changes to appointment times, etc. please contact your Advanced Practice Provider's office.

For general questions about the program please contact the **Central East LHIN Central Intake Office at 1-800-263-3877 x 2828.**

For more information on Rapid Access Clinics for musculoskeletal conditions, including low back pain, please visit the Health Quality Ontario at <http://www.hqontario.ca/Quality-Improvement/Quality-Improvement-in-Action/ARTIC/ARTIC-Projects/Improving-care-for-people-with-musculoskeletal-conditions>