

## Addendum to “Back Pain”

The ACP and the American Pain Society have recently provided guidelines for the evaluation and treatment of acute and chronic low back pain (AIM 147 October 2, 2007). Here is a brief summary:

1. Three kinds of back pain:
  - Non-specific
  - Radicular or spinal stenosis
  - Other specific spinal cause
2. Psychosocial factors predict risk for chronic disabling back pain.
3. Do not image non-specific back pain.
4. Image patients with progressive neurologic deficits or if serious conditions are suspected.
5. Image radiculopathy or spinal stenosis if they are candidates for surgery or epidural steroids.
6. Acetaminophen or NSAIDS are first-line medications for most patients.
7. Next consider non-pharmacologic therapy.