



Neck Pain: Promoting wise healthcare

Healthcare is often described as 'high value' or 'low value'¹. Both are important to know about so you can get the right care, not care that is risky or has little benefit.

High value care is	Low value care is
✓ Effective – evidence suggests that it works to produce a positive effect ✓ Safe – there is low risk of harm ✓ Cost effective – despite cost, the care provides benefit relative to alternative options	✗ Ineffective – evidence suggests that the care will provide no or very little benefit ✗ Potentially harmful – the risk of harm is greater than any likely benefit ✗ Not cost effective – since the care is unlikely to provide benefit, the cost associated with care delivery could be used on other care options

High value care for Neck Pain:

- ✓ A diagnosis of neck pain that is based on a thorough clinical assessment, rather than on x-rays, scans (CT/MRI) or other tests. Neck pain following trauma such as a motor vehicle crash may require an x-ray or scan, if certain criteria are met.
- ✓ A personalised management plan for you that focuses on:
 - Accurate education about your neck pain that fosters a positive mindset (most neck pain improves; pain does not get worse as you age; it is important to learn how to relax and move your spine)
 - How to stay active, safely exercise and increase your physical activity and movement using a paced approach (not too much/not too little), how often and how much ("dose"), and how to manage if pain increases
 - Learning helpful ways to cope with pain and help manage distress and worry, as these factors can contribute to pain flares ups
 - Helping you achieve the things you want to do (at home, at work, school)
 - Promoting helpful habits (good sleep, social activities, working or studying)

¹ Scott IA, Duckett SJ In search of professional consensus in defining and reducing low-value care Med J Aust 2015; 203 (4): 179-181. || doi: 10.5694/mja14.01664



Low value care for Neck Pain:

- ✗ Relying mainly on medications and other passive treatments (things being done to you)
- ✗ Use of opioid medications (these have a significant risk of harm).
- ✗ Use of other treatments that do not have evidence of benefit. These include: neck collars and braces, bed rest, kinesiotaping, acupuncture, electrotherapy, traction, magnetic necklaces, massage, TENS, laser, Bowen Therapy, steroid injections

Important questions to ask your health professional

Here are [5 important questions](#) (available in 12 different languages) from the [Choosing Wisely](#) initiative. These are the recommended questions that you should ask your health professional about your osteoarthritis pain to help you decide what the right care is for you.

5 important question to ask your health professional(s)

1. Do I really need this test, treatment or procedure?
2. What are the risks?
3. Are there simpler, safer options?
4. What happens if I don't do anything?
5. What are the costs?