KNEE PAIN REFERRAL GUIDELINE

SYMPTOMS AND LABS

HIGH RISK
- Severe pain
- Not able to walk or bear-weight
- Severe swelling
- History of traumatic injury (twisting, "pop" or locking of knee)
- Calf pain or leg swelling
- Instability or giving way of knee
- Evidence of infection or inflammation

MODERATE RISK
- Moderate pain
- Able to walk with limp
- Moderate swelling
- History of acute or chronic onset
- Some catching, locking or giving way
- Taking OTC pain medication as needed

LOW RISK
- Mild pain
- Able to walk without limp
- Minimal swelling
- No history of traumatic injury
- No catching, locking or giving way
- No pain medication needed

SUGGESTED PREVISIT WORKUP

HIGH RISK
- Schedule urgent appointment with sports medicine
- Emergent evaluation if evidence of infection or inflammation

MODERATE RISK
- Consider radiographs
- Schedule routine appointment with sports medicine

LOW RISK
- RICE (Rest, Ice, Compression, Elevation)
- Ibuprofen and/or acetaminophen as needed
- Therapeutic exercise
- Activity modification and low impact activity

SUGGESTED CONSENTATION OR CO-MANAGEMENT

HIGH RISK

MODERATE RISK

LOW RISK

SUGGESTED EMERGENT CONSULTATION

SUGGESTED ROUTINE CARE

CLINICAL PEARLS

- Knee pain can affect individuals of all ages and activity levels
- Knee pain can be due to pathology within the knee joint or outside of the knee joint
- Obtaining radiographs can help to diagnose arthritic knee pain

- Losing weight as well as strengthening the hip, gluteal and core muscles can often help to decrease knee pain