

Back injury program

The Back Injury Program incorporates a case plan that uses the combination of early intervention and the identification of modified work as its basis. Most back injuries will see improvement without medical intervention.

The goal of the program is to maximize the worker's safe, sustainable return to work (RTW). This is done by using best practice interventions, like the back exam, to promote an individualized care plan for the worker.

In May 2007, the back model moved from a pilot process into an operational environment. Improvements have been made to the program, but the overall focus continues to be the same — **quality service and a timely RTW for the injured worker.**

The back exam

The back exam is an assessment completed by a physician who specializes in back injury management. The objective is to provide early, appropriate medical intervention including, but not limited to:

- confirmation of diagnosis
- assessment of the worker's ability to return to work/identification of RTW barriers
- expedited diagnostic testing to obtain medical closure
- provision of education/reassurance and a treatment plan to get the worker back to work as soon as possible
- expedited treatment recommendations
- liason with the worker's family physician

Who will receive a back exam?

If the primary compensable part of the worker's body is the back, and there are certain indicators present, a back exam will be requested for the worker. These indicators include:

- the worker not progressing with treatment or modified work
- treatment recommendation is bed rest
- increase in symptoms
- previous history of back claims/injuries

What does this mean?

- Early targeted disability management interventions for workers with back injuries.
- Higher return-to-work rates for injured workers — on average, 95% of workers who go through the back program return to work by 12 weeks post-accident.