



METASTATIC SPINAL CORD COMPRESSION (MSCC) KEY RED FLAGS

Info for
Professionals

Past medical history of cancer

(but note 25% patients do not have diagnosed primary)

Early diagnosis is essential

as the prognosis is severely impaired once paralysis occurs

A combination of Red Flags increases suspicion

(the more red flags the higher the risk and the greater urgency)



EARLY WARNING SIGNS OF MSSC

Greenhalgh S, Turnpenney J, Richards L, Selfe J (2010)

Info for
Professionals

- R** eferred back pain that is multi-segmental or band-like
- E** scalating pain which is poorly responsive to treatment (incl medication)
- D** ifferent character or site to previous symptoms
- F** unny feelings, odd sensations or heavy legs (multi-segmental)
- L** ying flat increases back pain
- A** gonising pain causing anguish and despair
- G** ait disturbance, unsteadiness, especially on stairs (not just a limp)
- S** leep grossly disturbed due to pain being worse at night

NB - Established motor/sensory/bladder/bowel disturbances → late signs