

## Neuropathic Joints (Charcot Joints)

### Eligibility

- Associated medical condition ( usually Diabetes )
- Unilateral
- Classical feature – painless deformity
- Altered sensation ( may occur with any neuropathy)
- Early stage- Oedema, erythema, local warmth. Often mimics infection
- Late stage- deformities +/- ulcers
- May take up to 2 years for complete resolution

### Differential Diagnosis

- Infection – cellulitis , osteomyelitis
- Inflammatory Arthropathy

### Information Required for Referral

#### History:

- Onset, progression, duration, severity, any initiating factors etc.
- Associated medical conditions
- Exact site of deformity
- Any other associate injuries
- Any treatment used ( immobilization, analgesics)

### Investigations Required for Referral

- Weight bearing ankle x rays, weight bearing foot x rays
- May show joint subluxation / dislocation +/- destruction
- Bone scan not useful (often mimics infection)

### Fax Referral to:

**Repatriation General Hospital**

**Fax:(08) 8374 2591**

### Red Flags

- 🚩 Increasing swelling/Redness or signs of infection, immediate referral to the **Emergency Department**
- 🚩 Continuous pain despite the non-operative management, to RGH

### Suggested GP Management

- Non weight bearing and elevate leg
- Refer diabetic foot clinic
- Orthotics – Total contact cast/CROW

### Clinical Resources

Charcot neuropathy of the foot and ankle: a review. **Varma AK**. Journal of Foot and Ankle Surgery 2013 Nov-Dec;56 (6):740-9

General Information to assist with referrals and the and Referral templates for FMC and RGH are available to download from the SALHN Outpatient Services website [www.sahealth.sa.gov.au/SALHNoutpatients](http://www.sahealth.sa.gov.au/SALHNoutpatients)

Version	Date from	Date to	Amendment
1.0	July 2014	July 2016	Original

