Ottawa Knee Rules
X-Ray for Acute Injury of the Knee

Scope
This guideline makes recommendations for adults ≥ 18 years with acute knee injuries, presenting for the first time in a clinical setting.

Key Recommendations
• Use the Ottawa Knee Rules (OKR) to exclude fractures and reduce unnecessary imaging.
• Advise patients to seek follow-up care if their pain or ability to bear weight has not improved in five to seven days.

Criteria
If one of the following is present, radiographs are indicated:

1. Age > 55 years
2. Isolated tenderness of patella (no bone tenderness of knee other than patella) - see A
3. Tenderness of the head of the fibula - See B
4. Inability to flex knee to 90°
5. Inability to bear weight both immediately and in the clinical setting for 4 steps (unable to transfer weight twice onto each lower limb regardless of limping)

This guideline excludes:
• Younger than 18 years
• Injuries greater than 7 days old
• Re-evaluation of recent injuries
• Altered levels of consciousness
• Paraplegia
• Multiple injuries or other fractures
• Pregnancy
• Isolated injuries of the skin without underlying soft tissue or bone involvement
  o Superficial lacerations or skin injuries
  o Abrasions
  o Puncture wounds
  o Burns
• Referral from outside clinical setting with prior radiographs