

Critical Tests

The notation “Critical Test” will appear in the history section of imaging reports in PACS for the following conditions:

1. Acute aortic rupture
2. Acute paralysis
3. Retained surgical foreign body

The Joint Commission’s requirement for any study flagged with the “Critical Test” notation is that the resident/attending reading the study call the requester regardless of the imaging test results. If you feel an alert is misplaced, you can add a memo with a short explanation on why this is not a critical test; these will be periodically reviewed.

Critical Results

“Critical Results” are:

1. Tension pneumothorax
2. Acute aortic dissection
3. Pulmonary embolism/emboli (segmental or larger)
4. Cord compression
5. Worsening cerebral herniation

For these “Critical Results” the reader must call the requester and/or the treating physician for the patient. You must document in the report the date and time of the communication, whom you spoke to, and what the mode of communication was (phone, in person).