

Updated: November 30, 2015

Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) Wait Times

Despite increases in the number of MRI machines, number of scans performed, and financial investments, demand and increasing clinical uses for [MRI scans](#) continues to outpace resources. As of November 2015, the demand for MRIs has increased by 25 percent from the previous year. Island Health – like health care jurisdictions around the world – has to balance this demand with other health care priorities and available human and financial resources.

What is the current MRI wait time in Island Health?

- Every MRI request is prioritized based on information from the referring physician and scheduled based on established provincial guidelines.
- Each case is categorized as emergency, urgent, semi-urgent or routine.
- Island Health recognizes that demand for MRIs continues to grow. Until we are able to increase capacity to meet this demand, many of the lowest urgency patients are waiting longer than clinically appropriate.
- Routine MRIs are prioritized into categories ranging from less than six months to twelve months, depending on the priority needs of the patient.
- Wait times for routine MRIs fluctuate monthly as demand for MRI changes. Please see our [Performance Measure](#) for more information.

Do you have cancellation lists?

- Cancellations for MRI scans are rare. When they occur, we use appointments for inpatients and urgent outpatients first, and then offer them to patients on the cancellation list (approximately 1 - 2 patients per week may be called).
 - To get on the MRI cancellation list you must be available at very short notice (within 2-4 hours).
- Please note:
 - You will only be called if there is a cancelled appointment available for you.
 - You will stay on the list until your booked appointment or until we offer you an earlier appointment.
 - Please do not call the department to ask about your place on the list.

If you meet the above criteria and are interested in getting on a cancellation list, please call 250-727-4508 (South Island) or 250-755-7677 (Nanaimo) and leave the following information:

1. Full name (spelled out)
2. Date of Birth
3. Date of scheduled appointment
4. Location of appointment
5. Short notice contact phone number

What if my condition changes?

If you feel your medical condition has changed, contact your physician.

Your physician can reassess your need and must then consult with an MRI radiologist.

How many MRI scans does Island Health do and where?

- As technology has improved, Island Health has increased the number of MRI machines and the number of MRI scans.
- Compared to 2012/13, Island Health is performing 17 percent (4,200) more exams.
- From April 1, 2014 to March 31, 2015 Island Health completed 28,064 MRI scans.
- Island Health currently has five MRI machines: three in Victoria (one at Royal Jubilee Hospital and two at Victoria General Hospital), one at Nanaimo Regional General Hospital and one mobile unit that travels between Campbell River, the Comox Valley, Port Alberni and Duncan.