



## Diagnostic Imaging Reports

### Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

*This document has been developed for health care providers and allied health professionals to help answer common questions about patient access to diagnostic imaging reports in Health Gateway. Please contact [HealthGateway@gov.bc.ca](mailto:HealthGateway@gov.bc.ca) if you have further questions.*

- [What is Health Gateway?](#)
- [Diagnostic Imaging Reports](#)
- [What does this mean for providers?](#)
- [What does this mean for patients?](#)

### What is Health Gateway?

#### 1. What is Health Gateway?

Health Gateway provides BC patients with secure and convenient online access to their health records. Patients can use either the website at [healthgateway.gov.bc.ca](https://healthgateway.gov.bc.ca) or the mobile app. Learn more at [www.gov.bc.ca/healthgateway](https://www.gov.bc.ca/healthgateway).

#### 2. What can patients see in Health Gateway?

Health Gateway currently includes:

- Lab results
- Prescription medications
- Immunization history
- Health visits billed to BC MSP (date, location, visit type and provider name)
- Hospital visits (date, location, service type and provider name)
- Some clinical documents shared by your care provider
- Special Authority drug coverage request status
- COVID-19 PCR test results and proof of vaccination
- Organ Donor Registration
- Diagnostic imaging reports

### Diagnostic imaging reports

#### 3. When will diagnostic imaging reports be added to Health Gateway?

Access to diagnostic imaging reports was added to Health Gateway in October and November.

#### 4. Are all diagnostic imaging reports included? What is out of scope?

##### Included in the October/November 2023 release

- Diagnostic imaging reports dated Sept 1 or later from public sites within:
  - Fraser Health
  - Interior Health

- Island Health
- Northern Health
- Vancouver Coastal
- Providence Health Care
- PHSA
- Modalities include X-Ray, CT, MRI, Fluoroscopy (RF), Ultrasound, Mammography (MG)
- 7-day publishing delay
- Patients will:
  - See basic info about exam, modality, and imaging facility
  - Be able to download the PDF report
  - Access in-app patient support to reputable content

**For future iterative releases – phase 2 onwards**

- The following modalities
  - Cardiology exams related to Phase 1 modalities
  - Nuclear Medicine: BD (Bone Density), NM, PET
  - IR (Interventional Radiology)
  - VL (Vascular Lab)
- Historical reports before September 1 2023

**Out of scope**

- Images will not be included. Only the report will be available.
- Diagnostic imaging reports from most private clinics will not be available in Health Gateway as they currently are not published to PDIV.

**5. Is Health Gateway the only place patients can get their diagnostic imaging reports?**

No. Patients can already access their diagnostic imaging reports through several health authority patient portals, including:

- MyHealth (Vancouver Island Health Authority)
- My Health Portal (Interior Health)
- HealthELife (Northern Health)

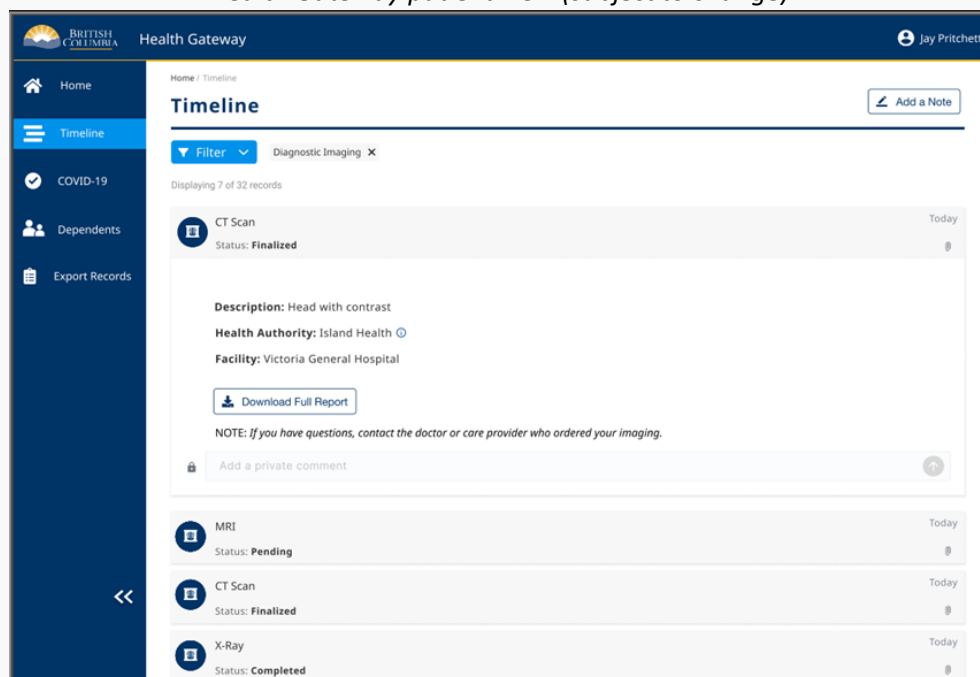
An increasing number of patients also get a paper copy of their records from the Health Records Department at health authority sites in BC.

## What does this mean for patients?

### 6. What will patients see in Health Gateway?

Health Gateway plans to display the imaging modality, report status, description and imaging facility location. Patients can download a PDF of the full report.

*Health Gateway patient view (subject to change):*



### 7. How soon will the patient see their diagnostic imaging report in Health Gateway?

Health Gateway is implementing a 7-day delay between report finalization and patient access of the report in Health Gateway.

### 8. How does this delay align with other organizations and jurisdictions?

Many organizations and jurisdictions release information to patients with no delay, while others release with some delay. Northern and Island Health Authorities also have a 7-day delay on releasing diagnostic imaging reports. In response to patient demand, Interior Health has recently reduced their publication delay on diagnostic imaging reports from 7 days to 4 days. Other provinces release with no delay.

### 9. What have patient representatives said about this change?

Releasing imaging or test results has shown to increase a patients' level of engagement and sense of empowerment regarding their own health (BC Excelleris Study, [Impacts of direct patient access to laboratory results, 2015](#)). While it is reasonable to expect that the release of some imaging results will cause patient anxiety, it is important to recognize that the waiting associated with an unknown result also causes anxiety, and that receiving high-stakes imaging results during a visit does not give a patient time to prepare. Advice from patient advocates is that the benefits of receiving imaging or test results release outweigh the risks.

**10. Will historical diagnostic imaging reports be available?**

Reports dated before September 1, 2023, will not be included in the initial release in Health Gateway.

**11. What if patients try to interpret their own results?**

The general population is becoming increasingly familiar with accessing their health information online, particularly through the recent pandemic shifts to more virtual care. Health Gateway contains an [online guide](#) and in-app tips to help answer patients' questions. To support appropriate review of diagnostic imaging report information, Health Gateway will include the following tips:

*Diagnostic imaging tests and the results provide a partial picture of your health. To interpret these results, clinicians must combine these test results with your medical history, current symptoms, and/or other diagnostic tests to determine next steps or arrive at a conclusion.*

*If you wish to learn about a particular test, the following websites are recommended:*

- i. HealthLink BC - <https://www.healthlinkbc.ca/tests-treatments-medications/medical-tests>
- ii. BC Radiology Society Patient resources- <https://bcradiology.ca/patient-resources/>

The Health Gateway mailbox ([HealthGateway@gov.bc.ca](mailto:HealthGateway@gov.bc.ca)) is available to answer patients' technical questions about accessing diagnostic imaging reports in Health Gateway.

**12. What happens if a patient wants a correction to their report?**

Patients should be directed to the Health Records Department, where they can follow the existing processes to request an update to their health records.

**What does this mean for providers?**

**13. How will patient access to DI reports via Health Gateway benefit providers?**

Sources already releasing DI reports directly to patients via portals report a reduction in administrative burden related to calls/inquiries from patients awaiting/looking for results. Additionally, patients are better positioned to prepare questions and educate themselves in advance of follow up appointments, resulting in more productive patient/provider conversations.

**14. Do I need to change how I talk to patients about DI procedures before I order them?**

You may need to consider giving patients more information about the implications of different results when initially ordering a procedure. A small investment of time up front discussing expected results may save you and your clinic staff future work. E.g., you may wish to let a



patient know that occasionally the radiologist preparing the report may mention incidental findings or suggest further testing.

You may wish to let the patient know that they may see the results before you do, the expected wait until the results return, and the expected length of time that you may need to evaluate the meaning of the test with other members of the care team before you will be ready to interpret it for the patient. Patients may elect not to view the results in advance of their follow up appointment.

**15. Will radiologists need to adjust the content of their diagnostic imaging reports?**

Many patients are already accessing their reports through their health authority patient portals or by requesting a copy from their health authority site’s Health Records Department. Radiologists are not expected to adjust their use of appropriate medical terminology, and most should find they don’t need to adjust their existing practices.

Radiologists are encouraged to continue using consistent reporting practices and should be aware that an increasing number of patients may be accessing their reports online.

**16. Will patients try to contact radiologists with questions?**

They shouldn’t. Patients are directed to contact their referring health care provider with questions. The 7-day publishing delay gives providers time to contact patients about their results. Health authorities that currently share diagnostic imaging reports on their regional portals say patients contacting radiologists has not been an issue.

**17. What is the process for unattached patients to receive follow up of diagnostic test results?**

According to the BC College of Physicians and Surgeons, the practice standards state:

*The timely follow-up of diagnostic test results and consultations is ultimately the responsibility of the ordering or referring registrant unless a system is in place to ensure that another registrant or nurse practitioner will take responsibility. If a critical report comes to the attention of any registrant in any context, they have an obligation to take reasonable steps to ensure that it is acted upon.*

**18. Is there a risk that a child’s report indicating potential non-accidental trauma will be viewed in Health Gateway by parents?**

No. Health Gateway currently only provides parent and guardian access to immunization records and COVID-19 test results. In addition, there is no functionality yet in Health Gateway for youth 12 and older to allow parents and guardians access to their records.