

A new option for preventative testing

Here's what's changed, and what it means for you

As of July 31, 2026, Albertans can now purchase certain preventative diagnostic imaging tests at participating private clinics without a referral from a doctor or nurse practitioner. These tests include MRIs, CT scans, ultrasounds and X-rays, and the clinics are expected to roll them out over the coming weeks.

You'll need to pay the full cost up front, and a regulated health professional at the clinic must confirm the test is appropriate and get informed consent from you. Please note that your plan does not cover self-referred testing.

Doctor- and nurse practitioner-referred medically necessary testing will still be publicly funded and prioritized based on clinical need in both public and private facilities.

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

What has changed

As of July 31, 2026, eligible Albertans can book certain preventative health tests at participating private clinics without first getting a referral from a doctor or nurse practitioner.

Who made the change

The Government of Alberta made this change through Bill 29 and Orders in Council 267/2026, 268/2026 and 269/2026.

What tests are included

The first tests announced are MRIs, CT scans, ultrasounds and X-rays. Participating clinics are expected to begin offering these services gradually over the coming weeks.

Who can access it

Adults aged 18 and older can self-refer. A parent or guardian can arrange testing for a child. People who don't live in Alberta can buy the tests, but they can't get reimbursed by the Government of Alberta.

Who pays

You'll need to cover the cost of the self-referred test at the clinic when you book or receive the service. Please note that Alberta Blue Cross® does not cover self-referred testing.

When reimbursement may apply

In limited cases, Albertans with Alberta Health Care Insurance Plan coverage may be reimbursed by the Government of Alberta up to public rates. This may happen only if the test leads to a new cancer diagnosis, was done at an accredited clinic on or after July 31, 2026, and the claim is submitted within 365 days of the diagnosis.

However, you'll still need to pay for the self-referred testing first at the clinic.

How follow-up care works

If cancer is found or suspected, the patient will be referred to the right publicly funded provider, including Cancer Care Alberta, for follow-up and ongoing care.