



Budget 2019-20

This information is accurate as at 2 April 2019.

Guaranteeing Medicare — improved access to diagnostic imaging

This measure improves access to Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) services.

From 1 March 2019 the measure:

- makes partially eligible MRI machines eligible for Medicare in private practice
- approves new allocations of eligible MRI machines to full Medicare eligibility in public and private practices.

The number of fully Medicare-eligible machines will increase by 23 nationally.

From 1 November 2019 the measure introduces two new MBS items for the following:

- use of Flurodeoxyglucose (FDG) positron emissions tomography (PET) studies for the evaluation of breast cancer
- MRI of the breast for patients with diagnosed breast cancer where previous imaging is inconclusive.

From 1 May 2020:

- Changes will make sure newer equipment is used for diagnostic imaging services.
- Changes will be made to the co-claiming of some diagnostic imaging services with consultations by a specialist radiologist. This includes clarification on when it's appropriate to claim a consultation service with a diagnostic imaging item.
- Items used for ultrasound guided breast biopsy procedures will be refined. Item descriptions will be updated to discourage inappropriate claiming of these services.
- Nuclear medicine services items will change with 23 non-positron emission tomography (PET) items closing and 25 non-PET item descriptions amended. Explanatory notes will be amended to clarify when it is inappropriate to co-claim diagnostic contrast enhanced computed tomography (CECT) and PET scans.
- Changes will be made to imaging of the head and neck items. Six existing items will close and two new items will be created.
- Changes will be made to imaging of the upper and lower limbs. One item will close and two new items will be created to cover CT scanning.

- Two items for general and whole body imaging will be updated to ensure they are aligned with current terminology.
- The service time for MRI for two poly implant prosthesis items will increase from one service in 12 months to one service in 24 months.
- Pregnancy-related scans will be amended to better reflect clinical indications for when the services should be performed.
- Changes to current restrictions on ultrasound and other diagnostic imaging items will be removed to allow items to be claimed within the same 24 hours.
- New items will be created for bilateral musculo-skeletal items.

Who is affected by this measure?

This measure affects:

- health professionals and customers using MRI machines, and
- patients eligible for MBS items and health professionals providing these services.

When will this start and finish?

Changes to the number of fully eligible MRI machines start 1 March 2019 and are ongoing.

Changes to MBS items for the use of Flurodeoxyglucose (FDG) positron emissions tomography (PET) studies and Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) of the breast start 1 November 2019 and are ongoing.

Changes to Diagnostic Imaging MBS items start 1 May 2020 and are ongoing.