

## Choosing Wisely and Right Care Alberta: MRI Knee for Osteoarthritis

---

In alignment with Right Care Alberta, Diagnostic Imaging plans to help patients, families and healthcare providers choose and use quality health services that are evidence-based, necessary, respectful, safe and person-centered. Although every patient's situation is unique, we want to ensure that diagnostic testing is necessary and beneficial to the patient outcome.

As specialists in Diagnostic Imaging, we understand that it can be challenging to know when imaging is important. We are working with physicians to increase the appropriateness of referrals for the investigation of knee osteoarthritis. Supporting clinicians with decision-making and reducing variation are key objectives for us.

Ordering Knee MRI for osteoarthritis characterized as **moderate OR anything more severe** rarely adds useful information to guide diagnosis or treatment, incurs further waiting times for patients and can cause unnecessary anxiety while waiting. Our collaborative efforts will ensure that MRI exams on the wait list are necessary and beneficial.

Based on a successful pilot project in Calgary Zone, Diagnostic Imaging plans to fully implement across the province in a phased zone approach over the next twelve months.

Beginning October 4, 2021 in the Edmonton Zone, Diagnostic Imaging will be declining MRI knee requests for patients **55 years of age and older**, that do not align with Choosing Wisely recommendations. Implementation in South, Central and North zones will follow at a later date.

“The National Choosing Wisely Guidelines recommend Physicians NOT order a knee MRI when weight-bearing x-rays demonstrate osteoarthritis and patient symptoms are suggestive of osteoarthritis”

The diagnosis of knee osteoarthritis can be effectively made based upon plain radiography consisting of weight-bearing posterior-anterior, lateral and skyline views and clinical assessment.

For more information, please access the following links:  
<https://choosingwiselycanada.org/orthopaedics/>

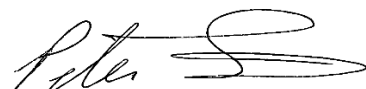


Your feedback is welcome. Please email [DIClinicalAppropriateness@albertahealthservices.ca](mailto:DIClinicalAppropriateness@albertahealthservices.ca) if you have further questions or comments. Thank you for your understanding, as we work together to reduce areas of low value imaging, whenever possible.

Sincerely yours,



Dr. W.W. (Bill) Anderson, MD, FRCPC  
Provincial Clinical Medical Director  
Diagnostic Imaging  
Alberta Health Services



Peter Froese, BAHA, CHE  
Senior Operating Officer  
Diagnostic Imaging  
Alberta Health Services