



# 2024 Health care wait times in Canada – worsening delays

The median reasonable wait time in Canada is 8.6 weeks from GP referral to specialist treatment. Today, this means that on average, Canadians are waiting more than 20 weeks longer for treatment than is medically reasonable. As a result, we face worsening conditions and mental health. Medical outcomes may also be compromised, “transforming potentially reversible illnesses or injuries into chronic, irreversible conditions, or even permanent disabilities”.

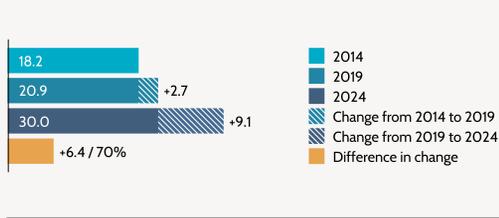
Comparing wait times from 2014, 2019, and 2024, we see a dramatically larger increase in the most recent five years over the previous five years.



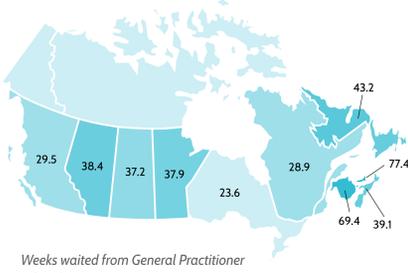
In 2024, Canadians waited an average of **30 weeks** for specialist treatments

## Median wait times from referral to treatment 2014, 2019, and 2024 comparison

Wait times increased a relatively moderate 2.7 weeks during the five years between 2014 and 2019. Whereas over the most recent five years, wait times increased 9.1 weeks. That's a 6.4 week increase, or 70% more than the previous five years.



Weeks waited from General Practitioner referral to treatment

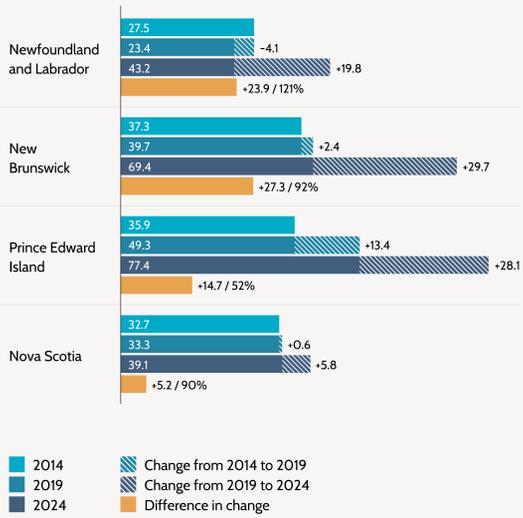
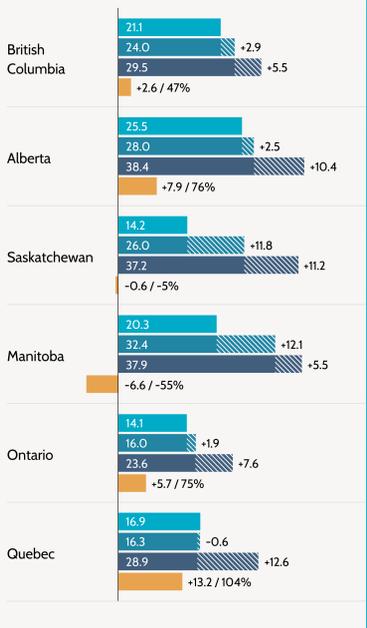


Weeks waited from General Practitioner referral to treatment in 2024

## Median wait times by province 2014, 2019, and 2024 comparison

Some provinces saw improvements in weeks waited between 2014 and 2019. Where this occurs, the difference is added to the difference in increase, instead of subtracted. No provinces saw improvements over the last five years (since 2019). Maritime provinces suffer the longest wait times, with PEI currently reporting the worst wait times for specialist treatment, and New Brunswick seeing the largest increase since 2019.

Saskatchewan and Manitoba were the only two provinces to have a larger increase from 2014 to 2019.



Weeks waited from General Practitioner referral to treatment

## Specialties definitions

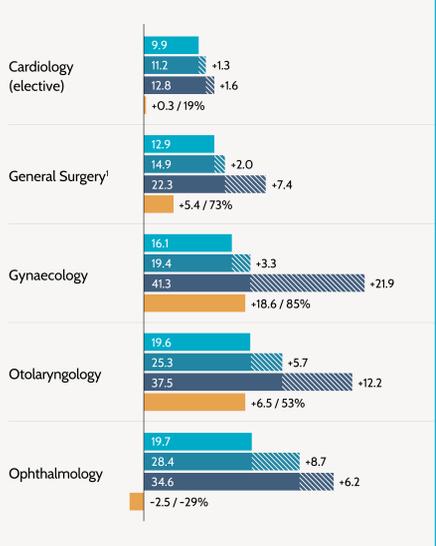
- Cardiology**  
Study and treatment of disorders of the heart and blood vessels.
- General Surgery<sup>1</sup>**  
Surgical care for alimentary tract, abdomen, breast, skin, and soft tissue, and the endocrine system.
- Gynaecology**  
Study and treatment of women's diseases, especially those of the reproductive organs.

- Otolaryngology**  
Study and treatment of ear and throat diseases and disorders.
- Ophthalmology**  
Study and treatment of disorders of the eye.
- Orthopaedic Surgery**  
Treatment of disorders of the bones, joints, ligaments, tendons and muscles.
- Urology**  
Treatment of the male and female urinary tract (including kidneys).



## Median wait times by specialty 2014, 2019, and 2024 comparison

Ophthalmology was the only specialty which had worsening wait times between 2014 and 2019 compared to the most recent five years. Orthopaedic surgery and gynaecology saw the most substantial increases in wait times, respectively, with the former taking top spot overall for wait times in 2024 at a whopping 57.5 weeks.



Weeks waited from General Practitioner referral to treatment

## Diagnostic tests

### Median wait times for all of Canada

All three diagnostic tests had higher increases since 2019 than they did between 2014 and 2019. However, magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) wait times were impacted the most, increasing by more than 16 weeks since 2019.

CT scans will have you waiting...

If you live on Prince Edward Island, you'll be waiting **26 weeks (6 months)** to receive a computed tomography (CT scan).

**6.5x longer**

6.5x longer than in Quebec, where you'll only be waiting four weeks – something which hasn't changed since 2014.

Need an MRI?

PEI residents will also wait the longest for an MRI at **52 weeks (1 year)**, a wait time that has more than doubled since last year alone!

**← 52 weeks 8 weeks →**

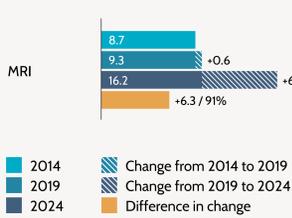
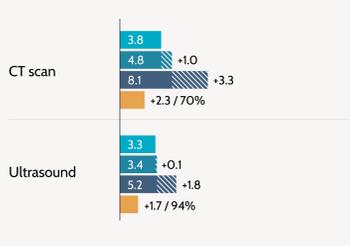
Compared to just **8 weeks (about two months)** which patients wait in Quebec – again, this was the same in 2014!

Ultrasounds sound easier

Despite the relatively short wait for an ultrasound, there was a **94% higher increase** in the most recent five years compared to the five years prior.

**94% higher increase**

Once again, PEI residents will wait the longest at **26 weeks (6 months)**, New Brunswick residents wait the second longest at **16 weeks**, while people living in Alberta and Saskatchewan only wait **2 weeks!**



Weeks waited from General Practitioner referral to diagnostic test



## References

- Data is derived from Waiting Your Turn reports from the Fraser Institute.
- Waiting Your Turn: Wait Times for Health Care in Canada, 2019 Report | Fraser Institute
- Waiting Your Turn: Wait Times for Health Care in Canada, 2024 Report | Fraser Institute
- Waiting Your Turn: Wait Times for Health Care in Canada, 2014 Report | Fraser Institute