



# What You Can Do to Help Improve Wait Times

## Ask about getting your test or procedure done at a different location.

Discuss with your doctor or nurse practitioner if getting tests or treatment in places where waits are shorter is a possible option for you.

## Cancel scheduled appointments that you are unable to keep (including those for diagnostic testing).

If you are unable to make a scheduled appointment, let your healthcare provider know at least 48 hours in advance, or as early as possible. The more notice you provide, the greater the likelihood that the healthcare provider will be able to fill your appointment with someone else like you who is waiting for care.

**In July 2005, 10 per cent of the 1,136 patients booked for an ultrasound at the QEII did not show up. That means 113 people on the wait list could have been seen faster.**

## Avoid being on duplicate wait lists.

Some Nova Scotians are on more than one wait list in efforts to see a specialist faster. This takes up space that could be used by someone like you also waiting for care.

If you are on multiple lists, please remember to cancel appointments you no longer need, especially if you have already been seen by a specialist.

## Take preventive steps to improve your health.

By not smoking, eating well, getting regular physical activity, maintaining a healthy weight and not abusing alcohol, you can reduce your chances of developing chronic conditions, such as diabetes and obesity, that reduce quality of life and contribute to wait times.

By taking steps to becoming healthier, you may not need services like joint replacements down the road.

**A national study (August 2005) revealed one of the key factors that impacts the high demand for hip and knee replacements is obesity.**

## Have your health card with you at all times.

Your health card identifies you, and you alone, no matter where you receive care in the province. It lets authorized health providers view your up-to-date health information, which eliminates duplicate tests and unnecessary procedures that contribute to wait times.