

PRACTICE STANDARD

Nurse Practitioners: Screening and Diagnostic Tests & Imaging

Introduction

This practice standard sets the expectations that nurse practitioners must meet when ordering, performing, and managing screening and diagnostic tests and imaging. Screening and diagnostic services that nurse practitioners order may include:

- Laboratory,
- Miscellaneous services (such as cardiac stress tests, echocardiograms, Holter monitoring, amniocentesis, etc.), and
- Imaging (including X-ray, ultrasound, nuclear medicine, computerized tomography scans and magnetic resonance imaging).

Standards

1. Nurse practitioners order screening and diagnostic services, provide appropriate follow-up, diagnose and manage diseases, disorders and conditions within the scope of practice for nurse practitioners and their individual **competence**.
2. Nurse practitioners engage in evidence-informed diagnosing and management considering best practice guidelines and other relevant guidelines and resources.
3. Nurse practitioners:
 - a. Provide the appropriate clinical information when ordering screening and diagnostic tests and imaging.
 - b. Establish mechanisms within their practice setting(s) to track and follow-up on screening and diagnostic tests and imaging results.
 - c. Ensure **clients** are informed, in a timely manner, of screening and diagnostic test and imaging results, implications and needed follow-up.

- d. Communicate, as needed, screening and diagnostic test and imaging results with key providers involved in the client's care.
4. Nurse practitioners document follow-up (and follow-up attempts) with the client and key providers on significant screening and diagnostic test and imaging results, next steps and the care and treatment needed.

Limits & conditions

1. Nurse practitioners apply X-rays¹ only after completing **additional education**, and when organizational supports, including policies and procedures, are in place to support the safe application of X-rays.
2. Nurse practitioners applying X-rays also follow the standards for [Advanced Procedures and Activities](#).
3. Nurse practitioners apply X-rays in an appropriate clinical setting that is suitable to safely perform the procedure and includes the equipment and supplies needed to manage any emergency situations.
4. Nurse practitioners only use Health Canada-approved devices when applying X-rays.
5. Nurse practitioners do not take responsibility for the final interpretation of medical imaging studies. Nurse practitioners may initiate appropriate treatment while waiting for the final interpretation from a diagnostic radiologist.

Glossary

Additional education: structured education (e.g. workshop, course, program of study) designed so that nurse practitioners can attain the competencies required to carry out a specific activity as part of nurse practitioner practice. Additional education builds on the entry-level competencies of nurse practitioners, identifies the competencies expected of learners on completion of the education, includes both theory and application to practice, and includes an objective, external evaluation of learners' competencies on completion of the education. The term does not refer to a course or program approved by BCCNM for BCCNM certified practice.

Client: individual receiving nursing care or services from a nurse.

Competence: integration and application of knowledge, skills and judgment required for safe and appropriate performance in an individual's practice.

Revision history

¹ Per the Nurses and Midwives Regulation, nurse practitioners do not apply X-rays for the purpose of computerized axial tomography.

Version #	Approved by board	Bylaw in-force	Description
1.0	March 1, 2026	April 1, 2026	Initial publication

Effective April 1, 2026, this practice standard, and any amendments to it, is made a bylaw under the authority of the *Health Professions and Occupations Act, B.C.*

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