



Did you know that fees for tests such as X-rays, CT scans, and MRIs can vary tremendously, depending on where you have them performed?

Did you know that hospitals tend to be the most expensive option for diagnostics and outpatient procedures? A better option may be an **independent diagnostic center**.

### What is an independent diagnostic center?

Independent diagnostic centers are an alternative to hospitals to obtain services, such as lab studies, X-rays, and MRIs. In fact, often the services are provided at a fraction of the cost charged by hospitals. By using freestanding centers, you could save between 50 to 70 percent over having the same procedure done at a hospital, and there is no difference in quality of service.

Freestanding diagnostic centers are not affiliated with any particular hospital and are typically open Monday through Friday for appointments.

### Why are hospitals more expensive for diagnostics procedures?

Hospitals often charge higher fees for outpatient procedures to offset the costs of their 24/7 facilities and operations. Hospitals may also charge more to offset other poorly reimbursed services and are able to charge Medicare and third-party insurers a "facility fee," which leads to price inflation.

### What can you do the next time you need a diagnostic procedure done?

The next time your doctor recommends an X-ray, CT scan, MRI, blood work or any other type of diagnostic testing, ask questions and shop around. Gain the information you need to understand and feel comfortable with the procedure. Use your provider's website or call customer service to obtain price quotes from different diagnostic centers. Although your doctor may refer you to a specific hospital for outpatient procedures, you can inquire about alternatives. You can ask your doctor or your insurance company about diagnostic centers near you.

**Ultimately, you have the power to choose the diagnostic center that is the best fit for you and your healthcare dollar.**