

FAST – Vascular Surgery FAQs

For Surgeons & Surgical Staff



What is FAST?

Facilitated Access to Specialized Treatment (FAST) is a provincial central access and intake program that receives surgical referrals, checks them for completeness and sends them to surgeons.

What are the benefits of FAST for surgeons and surgical staff?

- Referrals are checked for completeness and accuracy before they are sent to you. This helps you triage the patient appropriately and prevents you/your staff from having to request this information to complete the referral.
- Referral requirements are the same across the province, ensuring the referral process is consistent and standardized regardless of where you're located.
- Telephone and email support from the FAST team is available Monday to Friday.
- Data captured through the FAST office provides transparency into waitlists and insight into future surgical improvements.

When is vascular surgery joining FAST?

Vascular surgery joined FAST on Monday, November 27, 2023.

What tools have been created to support referring providers when a referral might be required?

1. Clinical pathways available through [Alberta's Pathway Hub](#) provide a set of actions for referring providers to guide care options for patients with specific health conditions. This can be used as a first step to see if there are any options to support the patient in the medical home before a referral is required.
2. The [Provincial Adult Vascular Surgery Referral Pathway](#), or guidelines to know what information like labs and diagnostic imaging are required, has been created to support referring providers when making referrals.
3. A [vascular surgery referral form](#) will support referring providers to make a referral to FAST.

How will referring providers make referrals into vascular surgery?

Referring providers and their patients can choose to see a next available surgeon with the shortest wait time, a specific provider/clinic/site or an out of Zone provider. Referrals can be submitted by fax, Alberta Netcare eReferral or Connect Care using the outgoing referral process.

Vascular surgeries are performed in Calgary or Edmonton. What happens to patients located in other Zones?

Referring providers will send vascular surgery referrals to their home Zone FAST team first. FAST will re-assign the referral to a surgeon based in Edmonton or Calgary. FAST will notify the referring provider where the referral has been sent and note that their patient will have to travel for their consultation appointment.

What if a referral is sent to my office directly. What happens?

Manage the referral as typical but send referring providers a reminder fax-back letter to submit future referrals via FAST.

What happens when FAST receives the referral?

FAST will:

- Check referral for duplication and completeness,
- Enter the referral into Alberta Netcare eReferral for tracking and referral management, and

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- If the referral is complete, send it to your office within two business days. If the referral is incomplete or does not meet criteria, it will be returned to the referring provider with information on how to move forward.

What happens after I receive the referral from FAST?

You will triage the referral as typical. Any communication to the referring provider and the patient will come directly from your office.

If I have questions about a referral, who can I contact?

The FAST team is available Monday to Friday to answer any referral-related questions. Call 1-833-553-3278 and choose the extension for the Zone you want to speak with.

What communication has been developed to promote the vascular launch to surgeons/surgical staff?

An extensive communication strategy has been developed to ensure surgeon/surgical staff receive information about this launch, including:

- Emails
- Medical association newsletters & e-newsletters
- Communication through Surgery Strategic Clinical Network (SCN) network
- Presentation opportunities
- Social media
- Online through ahs.ca/FAST

Where can I learn more about FAST?

Go online to ahs.ca/FAST or email ABFAST@ahs.ca.