

X-ray

What is an x-ray?

An X-ray provides a quick, painless image of your body structures. Bone and metal appear white because they are dense whereas air appears black. Fat and muscle appear in shades of gray. At times, contrast dye can provide more detail on the images.

Why is an x-ray performed?

X-rays are used to examine many parts of the body such as bones, teeth, chest, breast, heart, blood vessels, and abdomen. Diagnoses of fractures, infections, progression of disease, bone density, cancer, heart failure, blood vessels, swallowed items, and digestive tract problems are often revealed by X-ray.

How do I prepare for an x-ray?

In general, you undress whatever part of your body needs examination. You may wear a gown during the exam, depending on which area is being X-rayed. You may also be asked to remove jewelry, eyeglasses and any metal objects because they can show up on an X-ray.

What should I expect during an x-ray?

The machine produces a safe level of radiation that passes through your body and records an image on a specialized plate. You can't feel an X-ray.

A technologist positions your body to obtain the necessary views. Pillows or sandbags may be used to help you hold the position. During the test, you must stay still (and sometimes hold your breath to avoid moving) to prevent blurry images.

You may be allowed to stay with your child during the test. If you do, you'll likely be asked to wear a lead apron to shield you from unnecessary exposure.

How long does an x-ray take?

An X-ray procedure may take from a few minutes for a bone X-ray.

Are there any risks or side effects with an x-ray?

Some people worry that X-rays aren't safe because radiation exposure can cause cell mutations that may lead to cancer. The amount of radiation you're exposed to during an X-ray depends on the tissue or organ being examined. Sensitivity to the radiation depends on your age, with children being more sensitive than adults.

Generally, however, radiation exposure from an X-ray is low, and the benefits from these tests far outweigh the risks.

However, if you're pregnant or suspect that you may be pregnant, tell your doctor before having an X-ray. Though the risk of most diagnostic X-rays to an unborn baby is small, your doctor may consider another imaging test, such as ultrasound.

How will my results be communicated?

After the radiologist has reviewed and interpreted your images, a report will be sent to the ordering physician. Your physician will explain the meaning of your test results with you and next steps for your treatment and care plan.

How can I get a copy of my results?

Imaging results can be downloaded onto a CD for you to keep or share with other physicians. At times, electronic medical records allow other physicians to view the images if they have the same electronic system. Please allow 24 hours for film requests. Contact the imaging department for all film requests 540-785-7200. Films can be picked up at requested location. Charges may apply when requesting personal records.

Additional considerations:

It is not recommended to bring children under the age of 14 to your appointment unless accompanied by another responsible adult.

If appointments must be cancelled, please give us 24 hours' notice. If this is not possible, notify the office ASAP that you are not able to keep the appointment.

Please arrive 10-15 mins prior to appointment to allow time for the check-in process and appropriate questionnaires to be completed.