

What is an x-ray?



Patient and Family Education

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What is x-ray?

An image of the internal structures of the body produced by exposure to a controlled source of electromagnetic radiation kept in digital form and displayed on a computer screen.

Do I need to make any special preparations prior to having an x-ray?

No. However, please notify the Clinical Imaging Department if you have had a similar x-ray recently. Female patients who are, or might be pregnant, must inform the radiographer before the x-ray.

What happens before the x-ray?

The radiographer will explain the procedure and you may be asked to change into a hospital gown.

What happens during the x-ray?

You may be taken into the x-ray room where you will be asked to lay down on the x-ray table or stand against the x-ray equipment. You will be asked to remain still and/or to take a deep breath in and hold it for a few seconds.

Will it be uncomfortable?

No.

How long will it take?

The process of taking the image will last only a few minutes, but the radiographer may need to take further x-rays in different positions. This usually does not take more than five to ten minutes. Your total time in the department will be around 20 minutes.

What happens after the x-ray?

Patients can immediately leave the room. For outpatients, the results will be ready within five working days. For inpatients, the results will be available within two working days.

Are there any risks?

Exposure to radiation from medical x-ray is strictly controlled and kept to a minimum. X-rays are only ordered if medically necessary. Female patients who are, or might be pregnant, must inform the radiographer before the x-ray.

Can I eat and drink afterwards?

Yes. You may eat and drink normally.

Can I bring a relative or friend?

Yes. However, only in special circumstances, or in the case of pediatric patients, is a relative or friend permitted to accompany a patient into the procedure room.