

Radiology Directorate - Children's X-Ray Department
Royal Victoria Infirmary/Freeman Hospital

What is an X-ray?

When you have an x-ray, a special picture is taken of you. It is like a photograph, but it shows the doctor what is happening inside your body.

X-rays can show up the bones in your arms, legs, backbone and even your skull, which covers your brain. You can also have one of your chest and tummy.



There are all sorts of x-rays with special names. Each one looks at a different part of your body to find out what is wrong.

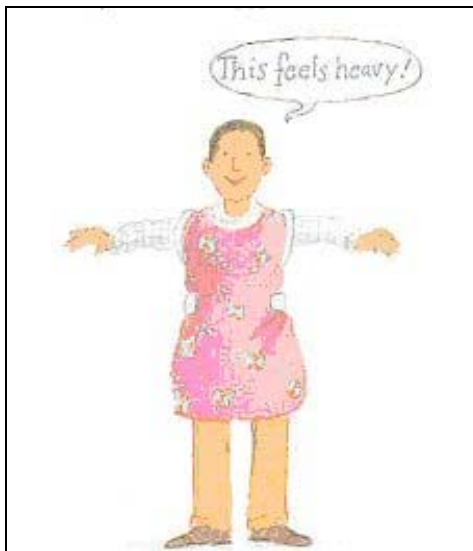
Most of the x-ray machines are metal and very big. They may come close to you, but having an x-ray doesn't hurt.



Things to know

It is very important to keep as still as you can while you are having an x-ray. Pretend you are playing musical statues and can't move your body at all.

First you will have to take off some of your clothes and you may need to put on a special gown. You will also have to take off anything metal. Metal things, such as necklaces, bracelets, buckles and zips show up on the x-ray.



Your mum or dad can stay with you all the time while you have your x-ray. But people who are not having an x-ray have to wear a heavy lead apron.

If your mum has a baby inside her tummy, she will not be able to hold you while the x-ray pictures are taken. But she can still stay in the room and wave to you through a special window.

The X-ray doctor

The x-ray doctor is called a radiologist. They are there to make sure the x-ray pictures are just right, to find out what is wrong and to look after you for the special tests. A nurse may stay in the room to help too.

The person who looks after the x-ray equipment is called a radiographer. They put in and take out the big plates of x-ray film and also takes the pictures. Sometimes the x-ray doctors do this themselves.

Haresh is having an x-ray of his leg because he fell over and hurt it while he was playing with his friends at the playground. Now it is very sore to walk on.



Haresh lies down on an x-ray table and puts his sore leg on the big metal x-ray plate for the x-ray pictures to be taken. He has to keep very still.

Sometimes babies have x-rays too. Beth is having a chest x-ray because she has a cough and is a bit wheezy. Mum holds her very still in a special position when the pictures are taken.



Parent Points

Preparation

The radiographer will position your child precisely for each picture. It is very important that they do not move before or whilst the film is taken. Otherwise the picture may be blurred or crooked. The best way you can help is to be relaxed and calm, to talk to your child and help hold them still.

It is a good idea to let them bring a favourite toy, book or comforter to keep them as happy as possible.

Are there any risks?

The image is made by giving your child a very small dose of x-rays.

What are the benefits?

The pictures help the doctors diagnose your child's problem to give the right treatment.

How long will it take? Positioning your child for a simple x-ray will take only a minute or two, then 5-10 minutes to process and check. More complicated examinations covering several different areas may take 30-40 minutes

Will it hurt? No, x-rays cannot be seen or felt.

What happens afterwards? The radiographer will check the x-ray images before you leave, to ensure they are technically correct, and that no further views are needed.

Are there any side effects? The doctor who requests the x-ray will only do so because the benefit to your child is much greater than not having the very small dose of x-rays.

Results

If your child has been sent by your GP the results of this examination will be sent to your doctor the next 7-10 days.

If your child has been sent by a hospital doctor, the result will be sent to your child's hospital doctor in the next 7-10 days and s/he will contact you either by appointment or letter.

Contact details

Enquiries – Please ring the appropriate hospital department, as below, that your child is attending:

Hours: 9.00am - 5.00pm, Monday - Friday

Royal Victoria Infirmary: 0191 2824429.

Liz Hunter / Maryline Forraz/ Judith Hobson

Freeman Hospital: 0191 2826427

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