

What is an x-ray?

An x-ray is a picture of the internal structures of parts of the body and is viewed on a computer screen. An ordinary x-ray is one of the most sensitive ways of detecting many problems, for example, arthritis or a chest infection.

They are usually carried out in hospital X-ray departments by trained specialists called radiographers.

Why do I need an x-ray?

The medical team caring for you need more information and have asked the radiology department to take an x-ray to assist them in their diagnosis. This information can be used to decide the best form of further investigation or treatment.

Who performs the x-ray?

The x-ray will be performed by a radiographer who is trained in medical imaging.

What preparation will I need?

Usually none.

Also please tell the Radiology Department if you have recently had a similar x-ray.

I have diabetes. Does this change anything?

No.

What does the examination involve?

Depending on which part of the body is being examined, we may ask you to undress and put on a gown.

Women and girls between the age of 11 and 55 years may be asked for the date of their last menstrual period. Please say if you are or might be pregnant.

A radiographer will take you into the x-ray room and may ask you to sit, lie down or stand up depending on the x-ray examination

Although the radiographer will go behind the screen, you will be seen and heard at all times.

We will ask you to stay still and may ask you to hold your breath for a few seconds. You may hear a slight whirring noise from the machine.

The radiographer may take other x-rays in the same or different position to complete the examination.

Once the radiographer is happy that the x-rays are satisfactory and the examination is complete, you will be able to get changed and go home.

How long will the x-ray take?

Each x-ray is different and may take between 5 and 15 minutes to complete, depending on the area to be examined.

How does it feel?

You will not be aware of the x-ray. You may experience a little discomfort whilst being positioned to gain the best view of the area being examined.

When do I receive the results of my x-ray?

A radiologist (a medical doctor who specialises in imaging) will examine and report your x-ray. The report will be sent to the doctor who asked for this examination to be performed within two weeks. You should ring the doctor who referred you for this examination after this time.

What are the benefits of having an x-ray?

This examination will help us make the correct diagnosis so we can give you the correct treatment.

What are the risks/side effects of x-ray?

All x-ray machines produce potentially harmful x-rays. Modern equipment is designed to keep the dose to patients as low as possible. If your doctor has asked for an x-ray, then they will have decided that the benefit of having the information that the x-ray gives, is greater than the risk of the small dose of radiation.

Can I drive home?

Yes.