

X-ray

What is an X-ray?

An X-ray is a form of energy that can pass through your child's bone and tissue to create an image. The image created and the exam itself is also called an X-ray. A doctor called a radiologist looks at the image to detect and diagnose conditions in the body.

Bone looks white on an X-ray because it is dense. Less dense areas—such as the lungs, which are mainly air—look black or grayish on an X-ray.

How can I prepare my child for the exam?

Dress your child comfortably in clothes that are easy to take off. Sweats are a good choice. Your child may be given a gown to change into.

Avoid letting your child wear jewelry or clothing with metal (zippers or snaps) in the area that will be X-rayed.

How do we check in for the appointment?

You need to have a doctor's order, like a prescription, before your child is X-rayed. If the X-ray was ordered by a doctor at Children's, we have the order in our computer system. If the X-ray was ordered by a doctor outside of Children's, please bring the order with you, or call before you come to make sure that your child's doctor faxed it to Children's.

You do not need an appointment for plain diagnostic X-rays. You do need an appointment for bone X-rays.

Check in at the 4th floor registration desk inside the Whale entrance. After you complete registration, you will be directed to the Radiology

reception area. The wait time is usually 5 to 45 minutes, depending on how busy Radiology is. The busiest time is between 11 a.m. and 2 p.m.

What happens during the exam?

What happens during the exam varies a little, depending on the part of your child's body being X-rayed. Most of the time, the technologist will take two to three images from different angles or with your child in different positions.

The X-ray machine will either be a long table with a camera on top of it or a large plate against the wall, with the camera pointing at it.

The technologist will position your child and point the camera at the body part being examined. The camera will not touch your child, but it may come close. A light will shine from the camera to help the technologist position your child to get the best picture possible.

We will put a lead shield on your child as long as it does not get in the way of the exam. If you stay in the room during the X-ray, we will give you a shield to wear also.

The technologist will ask your child to hold still. Your child may also be asked to hold their breath for a second. You may be asked to help hold your child still during the exam. Any movement during an X-ray will cause the image to be blurry. The images appear on a computer screen and are sent to the radiologist to be read.

Your child will not feel the X-rays, but sometimes, the positions needed to get the right images are awkward or uncomfortable. Your child will only have to be in these positions for a couple of seconds.

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Parents can stay in the room with their child. Please make other arrangements for siblings.

Women who are pregnant or may be pregnant will be asked to leave the room during the test. Please make sure to bring someone else with you who can stay with your child during the test, if needed.

What happens after the exam?

There are no special instructions for your child to follow after the X-ray.

How do we get the results?

The images are reviewed within 24 hours, and a report will be sent to the doctor who ordered the X-ray.



TO LEARN MORE

- Radiology (206) 987-2133
- Your Child's Health-Care Provider

Children's will make this information available in alternate formats upon request. Please call Marketing Communications at (206) 987-5205.

This handout has been reviewed by clinical staff at Children's Hospital. However, your child's needs are unique. Before you act or rely upon this information, please talk with your child's health-care provider.