



What is a x-ray?

An x-ray is a quick procedure that is commonly used as a means of looking at the human body. Some x-rays are performed in the standing position and others are taken lying down. Whilst x-rays themselves are painless, in some instances, you may experience slight discomfort caused by the position you are required to be placed in during the examination.

How does x-ray work?

X-rays are a type of invisible electromagnetic radiation. To produce an x-ray of the human body, the patient is placed between the x-ray and the x-ray plate. The Radiographer then exposes the x-ray plate by turning on the x-ray tube for a tiny fraction of a second. X-ray plates work electronically and are connected to a computer to develop the images.

Who does my x-ray and report?

The person who operates the equipment is a Radiographer. They are university trained and accredited with the Australian Institute of Radiography (AIR). The person who views and interprets the films is a doctor specialising in Radiology, known as a Radiologist. The Radiologist prepares a report for your Health Care Professional.

What should I expect when I have my x-ray?

To allow for the best digital image of the area of clinical interest you will be asked to stand or lie down in different positions. During the x-ray you will be asked to remain as still as possible or hold your breath in order to improve image quality. Similar to a normal photograph, anything moving will appear blurry and may result in the need for a repeat x-ray. Some x-ray procedures take a short amount of time and others may take longer depending on the complexity of the examination and the number of x-rays required. X-rays may be taken from several different angles so that the doctor can gain extensive information.

How do I prepare for my x-ray?

You are not required to undertake any advance preparation for an x-ray. At the clinic, you will be taken to a change room where you will be requested to remove relevant clothing and jewellery and to wear an examination gown. All metal objects such as keys, clips, buttons, coins and mobile phones etc must be removed from the path of the x-ray beam. Some body parts which are sensitive to radiation may be protected with a lead shield.

Are there any risks or side effects from having my x-ray?

Female patients who are pregnant or think they may be pregnant, must advise the Radiographer before the examination. If there is any doubt, a different test that doesn't use x-rays may be performed. If no substitute test is appropriate, then the test may be cancelled pending confirmation of pregnancy as x-rays may be harmful to the unborn child. The risk of harm from a diagnostic x-ray scan in an adult is very small and is balanced against the risk of not performing the scan. The information gained from an x-ray, such as early diagnosis and treatment may have significant health benefits.

Things to bring along to my appointment:

- Previous films for area of clinical interest.
- Medicare or Department of Veteran Affairs card (as we bulk bill all eligible Medicare services).
- Referral (this is a legal requirement).
- Workcover details and claim number (if this is a Workcover claim).

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