

Information for Consumers - X-Ray (Plain Radiograph)

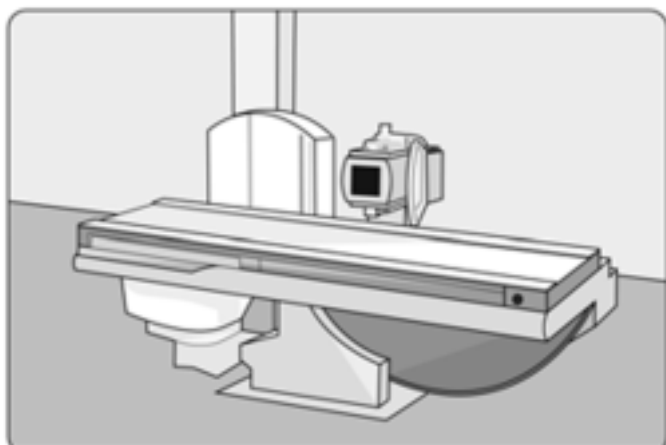
This article tells you about an x-ray, the benefits and the risks, what happens before, during and after having an x-ray.

What is an x-ray?

X-rays use a special type of radiation to take pictures of bones and some parts inside the body, including the lungs. You will be asked to lie on a bed or sit down between the x-ray tube and a receiving plate which makes the picture.

A plain x-ray is used to look at bones for:

- Fractures
- Dislocated joints
- Fluid around bones and joints
- Infection
- Bone growths
- Bone diseases



Benefits of x-rays

- Painless, fast and easy
- **No radiation** is left in your body after the x-ray is finished

Risks of x-rays

Your doctor knows the risks of having an x-ray. Your doctor will consider the risks before recommending you to have an x-ray. Possible risks are:

- Not recommended for pregnant women
- Very small chance you could develop cancer in the long term from the radiation.

Preparation

- Bring your referral letter or request form and all x-rays taken within the last 2 years with you
- Leave the x-rays with the radiology staff as the doctor may need to look at them. The radiology



- staff will tell you when these are ready to be picked up
- Leave all jewellery and valuables at home

Just before the x-ray

- There is no special preparation for x-rays
- You may be given a gown to wear
- You may be asked to remove any metal objects

Important to tell your doctor before the x-ray

- If you are or may be pregnant
- If you have difficulty taking a deep breath and holding your breath

What happens during an x-ray?

X-ray staff will ask you to stand, sit or lie down depending on which part of the body is being x-rayed. Tell the x-ray staff if you have difficulty standing or sitting.

X-ray staff may place a protective shield over the parts of your body not being x-rayed, or you may be asked to wear a protective apron.

Once you are ready, the x-ray staff will go behind a screen or into the next room to start the x-ray machine. They will ask you to be still, and may ask you to take a deep breath and hold your breath during the x-rays.

When your x-ray is finished you will be asked to wait while the x-ray staff check the pictures, as you may need another x-ray.

The x-ray usually takes about 15 minutes including time taken to get ready.

Consent

You have the right to refuse an examination and may do so if you wish. A written consent is generally not required for plain x-rays.

When will I get the results?

The amount of time it takes for you to get your results will differ depending on where you get your scans



done. The radiology doctor will look at the pictures and write a report. The pictures may be on films or on a CD.

Ask whether you should wait to take the pictures and report with you, or whether they will be sent to your doctor.

Your doctor will need to discuss the report with you. You will need to make an appointment to do this.

After the x-ray

You will be able to go soon after the x-ray is finished and can continue with normal activities.

Costs

For an Australian patient in a Public Hospital in Western Australia

- Public patient - no cost to you unless advised otherwise
- Private patient - costs can be claimed through Medicare and your health insurance provider

For a patient in a Private Hospital or Private Imaging Site in Western Australia or a patient outside Western Australia

- Ask your doctor or the staff where you are having your test done what the cost will be

Further information

For more detailed information please access X-rays from InsideRadiology at: www.insideradiology.com.au

This is a resource produced especially for consumers by the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Radiologists: www.ranzcr.edu.au

A guide to gathering information that you may need for making informed decisions is published by the Consumers' Health Council of Australia at: <https://chf.org.au>

If you would like to look at another relevant article, please access the following: [Radiation risks of x-rays and scans](#)



Or access the Diagnostic Imaging Pathways website at:
www.imagingpathways.health.wa.gov.au/index.php/consumer-info

Or if you have questions or require any further information please contact your doctor or speak to the staff where you are going to have your procedure.

Consumer participation

This information has been reviewed by representatives from the following groups:

- Aboriginal people
- People with disabilities
- Seniors
- CALD (Culturally and Linguistically Diverse)
- The Health Consumers' Council

Feedback

All feedback, comments and suggestions regarding consumer information at Diagnostic Imaging Pathways are welcome. Please direct them to the following email address: dipfeedback@health.wa.gov.au

Disclaimer

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