

X-ray (Plain Radiography)

Introduction

Radiography is the imaging of body structures, or parts of the body, using X-rays. X-rays are a form of radiation (X-radiation) similar to visible light, radio waves and microwaves. X-radiation is special because it has a very high energy level that allows the X-ray beam to penetrate through the body and create an image or picture.

Plain X-rays are the simplest medical images created through X-radiation.

A radiographer will perform the examination.

Preparation

No specific preparation is required for a plain X-ray.

It is important that you tell your own doctor and staff at the radiology facility where you are having the X-ray if there is any chance you might be pregnant. This is important information, as it will make a difference in the way the X-ray is carried out or a different test altogether might be required. Your safety and that of your unborn child is the number one priority.

Depending on the type of examination you are having you may need some preparation. For some scans you will be asked to change into a gown.

You may also be asked to remove your hairclips, earrings, pins, chains or other items of jewellery before the examination, as these can sometimes interfere with the X-Ray.

For the X-ray, you should remain as still as possible. The whole test usually takes 5 to 10 minutes.

Results

A radiologist (a specialist doctor) assesses the images and sends the results to your referring doctor. You should not have any issues after your test. You need to discuss the results with your treating doctor.

Risks

Generally, the benefit of the X-ray procedure is far more important than the small estimated risk of the effects of radiation. At the radiation dose levels that are used in diagnostic radiography, there is little or no evidence of health effects.

More Information

InsideRadiology by the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Radiologists:
www.insideradiology.com.au

RadiologyInfo by the American College of Radiology and Radiological Society of North America: www.radiologyinfo.org

The Australian Radiation Protection and Nuclear Safety Agency: www.arpansa.gov.au

The Alliance for Radiation Safety in Pediatric Imaging: www.imagegently.org

ACI Radiology Network:
www.aci.health.nsw.gov.au