

## **X-rays on children A guide for parents**

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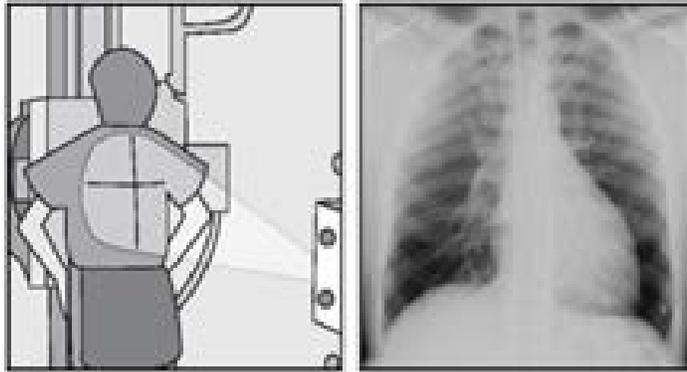
Welcome to McMaster Children's Hospital. This handout will help to answer your questions about an x-ray for your child.

If you have other questions, please ask one of our staff and they would be glad to explain things to you.

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## What is an x-ray?

An x-ray is a beam of radiation, similar to light, that can go through the body to create a picture.



X-ray machine

X-ray \*\*

## What does an x-ray show?

The x-ray shows the condition of bones and organs within the body. A Radiologist reads the images. A report is sent to the ordering doctor who then decides on a plan to care for your child. For example, when there are broken bones, an x-ray is the fastest and easiest way for doctors to see the injury.



## How many x-rays do you take?

The number of x-rays taken depends on the body part the doctor would like x-rayed and the reason for the x-rays. More than one x-ray is usually needed to show the body part from different directions.

## How much radiation is used?

All of us receive small amounts of radiation all the time – mainly from the sun and the soil. Scientists call this background radiation.

The amount of radiation used in x-ray films can be compared to the amount of background radiation we receive every day.

| Source of Radiation   | Days of Background Radiation |
|-----------------------|------------------------------|
| 3-hour airline flight | 1½ days                      |
| Hand and foot x-ray   | 3 hours                      |
| Chest x-ray           | 3 days                       |
| Abdomen x-ray         | 1 to 2 weeks                 |

## Will a lead shield be used?

Sometimes, a lead shield is used to protect parts of your child's body such as the testes, ovaries and thyroid gland. A lead shield may not be used if it covers an area the doctor needs to see on the x-ray.

Even though the amount of radiation received is low, the technologist will always protect your child as much as possible.

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## **Why do you need to keep my child from moving?**

The doctors need the clearest pictures to make a decision. When your child moves during the x-ray, it can blur some of the important structures in the body.

At times, devices need to be used to keep your child still for the x-ray to get the clearest picture.

Parents can be in the room while the x-rays are taken to comfort and help their child. You will need to wear a lead shield. Please tell the technologist if there is a chance of pregnancy.

## **What are the benefits of an x-ray?**

Parents are often concerned with the risks involved with getting x-rays.

The doctor believes that the benefits of x-rays most often outweigh any small risk.

An x-ray may show where the problem is in a way that may be missed without the test. X-rays help to show a number of medical problems that can then be treated.



## What should I do if I still have concerns?

Discuss any concerns with the doctor who ordered the x-ray. If your doctor cannot answer your question, please ask one of our staff and they will be glad to explain things to you.

## Location

Diagnostic Imaging is located on the 2nd floor, Yellow Section, 2S area of the McMaster Children's Hospital.

Phone: 905-521-2100, ext. 41484 (Press #3)



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