

X-rays on children A guide for parents

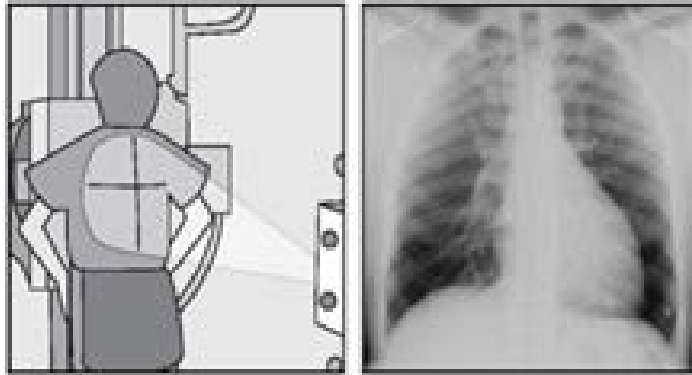


Welcome to McMaster Children's Hospital. This handout will help to answer your questions about an x-ray for your child.

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

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.

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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