

Information for patients and carers

Having an X-ray

A decorative graphic at the bottom of the page consisting of three overlapping, wavy bands of blue. The top band is a light blue, the middle is a medium blue, and the bottom is a dark blue.

What is an X-ray?

X-rays are similar to light but they have a much higher frequency which makes them invisible to the naked eye. An X-ray is a widely used diagnostic test to examine the inside of the body by forming an image.

Why should I have an X-ray?

An X-ray can give information that leads to or helps make a diagnosis about your medical condition. X-rays can also be used to monitor existing conditions.

Are there any risks?

X-rays are a type of radiation known as ionising radiation. The dose that you get from a medical X-ray is very low and the associated risks are minimal. They are similar in strength to other sources of natural radiation that people are exposed to every day without even realising it. The radiographer is responsible for making sure that your dose is kept as low as possible and that the benefits of the X-ray outweigh the risks.

Patients of childbearing capacity

Radiation can be harmful for an unborn baby. If you are or think you may be pregnant you **must** tell the radiographer **before** the X-ray. For some examinations the radiographer may check your pregnancy status with you before the X-ray.

Preparation for the X-ray

If you were given a form from the doctor who referred you for an X-ray, such as your GP, please bring this with you.

Various items of clothing can affect the quality of the X-ray. You may be asked to remove them and wear a hospital gown. If you do not wish to wear a hospital gown, then please do not wear clothing with zips, metal, buttons or that are made of thick material.

You may also be asked to remove jewellery, dentures, spectacles, and any metal objects or clothing that might interfere with the X-ray images. The items that need removing will depend on the type of examination that you are having.

You may bring a relative or friend with you to the X-ray department when you have your X-rays, although they will not usually be allowed into the X-ray room.

Unfortunately we are not able to offer childcare facilities. If you need to bring your children with you, please bring along an adult who can supervise them while your examination is being carried out.

If you have a medical condition which you feel may affect your safety in the department, or if you feel you may need any assistance, please let us know either before you attend or as soon as you arrive.

What happens when you arrive?

Please report to the reception desk in the X-ray department to book in. Depending on the type of X-ray you will be having, you may be asked to change into a hospital gown. You will then be taken into an X-ray room where your details will be checked with you.

What happens during the X-ray examination?

Your X-ray will be performed by a radiographer (a health professional trained in the use of X-rays), or an assistant practitioner (trained to undertake X-ray examinations).

Your X-ray may involve standing, sitting or lying down, depending on the examination. You will be asked to stay still and sometimes you will be asked to hold your breath for a few seconds. During the examination the staff will go behind a glass screen; you will be observed at all times.



Giving your consent (permission)

The radiographer/assistant practitioner will ask you if you are happy for the X-ray to go ahead. This is a form of verbal consent and may only involve the radiographer/assistant practitioner checking that you are booked for the correct X-ray. If you do not wish to have the X-ray, or are undecided, please ask the radiographer so that they can answer any questions you have.

Will you feel any pain?

You cannot feel X-rays and so the procedure itself is painless. It is important for the radiographer to get you into the correct position. Holding this position or lying on the X-ray table may, for some people feel uncomfortable but for the majority of patients this is not the case.

After the X-ray

The radiographer may ask you to wait in the department while they check that no further X-ray pictures are required. As soon as the radiographer is satisfied that no more X-rays are needed, you will be free to leave the department.

Your results

The X-ray pictures will be studied by a health professional trained in reading X-rays and the results will be sent to the clinician who referred you. The radiographer/assistant practitioner will tell you how you will receive your results and how long it will take. This may be different for each patient. You may already have an appointment with the clinician who referred you. If not, please contact them to arrange a time to talk about the results and any treatment you may need. If you are staying in the hospital the results will be given to the clinicians looking after you on the ward.

Contact details

Should you require further advice or information please contact:
X-ray Department Royal Preston Hospital on **01772 522480** or
X-ray Department Chorley and South Ribble Hospital on **01257 245864**.

Lines are open 8.30am to 4.30pm, Monday to Friday (excluding Bank Holidays).

Sources of further information

www.lancsteachinghospitals.nhs.uk

www.nhs.uk

www.patient.co.uk

www.accessable.co.uk

www.gov.uk/government/publications/ionising-radiation-from-medical-imaging-examinations-safety-advice/exposure-to-ionising-radiation-from-medical-imaging-safety-advice

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If you want to stop smoking, you can also contact Smokefree Lancashire on Freephone 08081962638

Please ask a member of staff if you would like help in understanding this information.

This information can be made available in large print, audio, Braille and in other languages.

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