

Under 6 years Radiology Factsheet

What is an X-ray?

When you have an x-ray, a special picture is taken of you. It is like a photograph, but it shows the doctor what is happening inside your body.

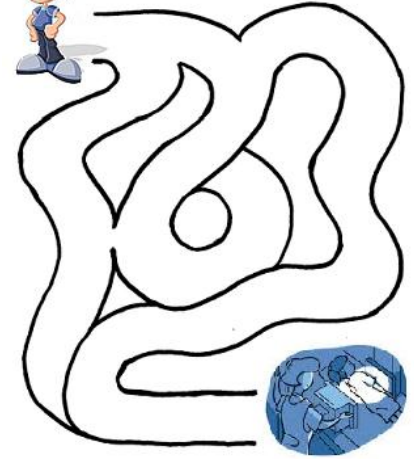
X-rays can show up the bones inside your body. You can also have an x-ray of your chest and tummy.

There are all sorts of x-rays with special names. Each one looks at a different part of your body to find out what is happening.

Most x-ray machines are metal and plastic and are quite big. They may come close to you, but they won't touch you.



Remember....don't wriggle!



Things to know

It is very important to keep as still as you can while you are having an x-ray. Pretend you are playing musical statues and can't move your body at all.

You may have to take off some of your clothes and put on a special gown. You will also have to take off anything metal as these will show up on your x-ray.

Your mum or dad can stay with you but they will have to wear a heavy lead apron. If your mum has a baby inside her tummy she will have to stand behind a special window and wave at you.

For the x-ray you may need to sit or lie down, stand up or even lie on your tummy.

Ultrasound (or 'jelly belly' test)

This test is done to show the size and shape of many parts inside your body. The doctor will put some special jelly onto the area they are going to look at and will then use a special instrument that looks like a big, fat lolly pop to smear it on. It may be cold and ticklish. Fuzzy pictures of the inside of your body will appear on a TV screen.

Parent points - This test takes about 10 minutes. It makes pictures using sound waves and doesn't involve any radiation at all.

If your child is still a baby, it is a good idea to bring a full bottle and dummy or be ready to breast feed just before the test starts. Bring a clean nappy too.

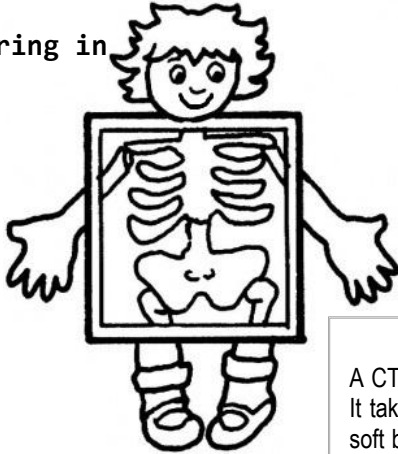
Nuclear Medicine (or 'magic potion' test)

This test is done to find out how different parts inside your body are working, especially your kidneys that make your wee. It can also look at your bones, insides, and even your brain. You will need to lie very still for your test. Before having this test you will most likely need to visit a nurse on the children's ward.

Parent points - this test is sometimes called a DTPA or DMSA. The liquid injected into your child's vein contains a tiny amount of a radio-active substance, but it gives a smaller radiation dose than most x-ray tests. When it reaches the organ the doctor needs to examine, the special isotope camera 'sees' the radioactivity and shows the doctor how well the organ is working, not what it looks like.

As the test can take between one and three hours, it is a good idea to bring something to occupy your child.

Colouring in



Parent points

X-rays and CT's are made by giving your child a very small dose of x-rays. The pictures help the doctors diagnose your child's problem to give the right treatment.

The radiographer will position your child exactly for each picture. It is very important he does not move before the image is taken. Otherwise the picture may be blurred and need to be repeated.

The best way you can help is to be relaxed and calm, to talk to your child and help hold him still if required.

It is a good idea to let him bring a favourite toy, book or comforter to keep him as happy as possible.

CT (or 'donut' test)

A CT scanner is a special x-ray machine, the pictures it takes look different from ordinary x-rays. It takes lots of pictures of your body, a bit like slices of bread. The test is done to show up your soft body parts, especially the ones in your head, using x-rays and a computer. You must lie very still.

Parent points - This test takes about 30 minutes and shows much more details than ordinary x-rays. Your child will need to lie very still so the doctors on the children's ward may give them something to make them sleepy. They may also need an injection of a liquid, called contrast, or a contrast drink that tastes like liquorice, both of these are used to better highlight the anatomy. Depending on their age, it may be possible to wear a lead apron and sit with your child during the scan.

MRI (or 'space capsule' test)

An MRI is a big magnet machine that takes lots of pictures of the inside of your body. It looks a bit like a space capsule. As you lie inside it to have pictures taken, you can pretend to be on an exciting space adventure. The machine is quite noisy so you can wear headphones and listen to music, but you must not dance, try to lay as still as possible.

Parent points - In an MRI test, complicated pictures are made by detectors and a computer using magnetic energy, not x-rays. Your child will need to lie very still so the doctors on the children's ward may give them something to make them sleepy. They may also need an injection of a liquid, called contrast that is used to better highlight the anatomy. Depending on their age you may be able to go into the scanner room with your child for reassurance. There is a strict safety questionnaire to be completed by all persons entering the scanner room.

Anyone fitted with a pacemaker must not enter the MRI department.