

Learning About Your Child's X-Ray Test

An X-ray is a picture of the inside of your child's body. It can show bones and organs and can check for problems in any part of the body, including the head, chest, belly, arms, and legs.

Doctors use X-rays for lots of reasons, like looking for broken bones or foreign objects in the body, or finding the cause of pain or other symptoms.

Sometimes X-rays are used to help with a treatment or procedure.

Here's how an X-ray is done. Before the test, your child will take off any jewelry or clothing in the area that's being X-rayed.

Your child may change into a hospital gown or scrubs. Ask the doctor if it's okay to stay in the room with your child. If you do, you'll wear a lead vest.

During the test, your child may need to hold still, in the same position, while the area is being X-rayed. This might be uncomfortable, especially if your child is injured.

Medicines are sometimes given to help with pain. Foam pads or a soft brace or headband can help gently hold your child in place.

To protect from radiation, a large apron or "shield" may be placed over parts of the body that aren't being X-rayed.

An X-ray tech--the person who does the test--will move the X-ray machine into position, to get the best angle for a clear image.

More than one picture may be taken, sometimes from different angles. The test usually takes several minutes. Depending on the reason for the test, your child may be able to go home right away.

Some kids may be nervous about getting an X-ray. Any test can be scary.

So, remind your child that an X-ray is safe and doesn't hurt, and that it's over quickly.

It's just like taking a picture.

When the test is done, ask your doctor if your child can look at the X-rays.

A lot of kids love seeing pictures of their bones or organs.

And that might help take away some of the fear about the test.