

Learning About Your X-Ray Test

An X-ray is a picture of the inside of your 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, you'll take off any jewelry or clothing in the area that's being X-rayed.

You may change into a hospital gown or scrubs.

During the test, you'll need to hold still, in the same position, while the area is being X-rayed.

This might be uncomfortable, especially if you're injured.

Medicines are sometimes given to help with pain.

Foam pads or a soft brace or headband can help gently hold you still.

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, you may be able to go home right away.

Some people may be nervous about getting an X-ray.

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Any test can be stressful, but remember 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 you can look at the X-rays.

You may find it interesting to see pictures of your bones or organs.

And that might help take away some of the stress.