Wrightington, Wigan and Leigh Teaching Hospitals
NHS Foundation Trust

Having an X-Ray

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Having an X-Ray

Patient Information

Radiology

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What is an X-Ray?

X-Rays are a type of radiation known as ionising radiation. The rays are similar to light, except 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. Examinations are usually carried out in hospital X-Ray departments by trained specialists called Radiographers.

Why do I need an X-Ray?

The doctor, or medical practitioner in charge of your care, may request an X-Ray to get more information about your medical condition. X-Rays are very useful when looking at bones, to check for fractures or healing, and can also be effective when looking at some soft tissue conditions, like pneumonia in the lungs.

Are there any risks?

The radiation dose you receive during an X-Ray is very low. It is like the background radiation you are exposed to in day-to-day life and the risks associated with the exposure are very low. X-Rays are requested only when there is a medical benefit to being imaged. There could be more harm to you if you did not have an X-Ray, as you may not be able to be treated correctly. The Radiographers taking the X-Rays are trained to keep the dose as low as reasonably practicable.

Preparation for your X-Ray

Some items of jewellery and clothing e.g. necklace/ bra can cause artefact on the X-Rays. You may be asked to remove these and change into a hospital gown for the image. If a private cubicle is not available, you can change in the exam room. The Radiographer will leave the room, ensuring the privacy curtain is closed.

X-Rays are performed at all four WWL sites – please pay attention to your appointment letter to make sure you arrive at the correct location.

What happens during the X-Ray?

Your X-Ray will be performed by a Radiographer or an assistant practitioner (a person trained to take X-Rays). The department also has student and apprentice radiographers training in the department; they are supervised at all times. All staff will introduce themselves.

You will be taken into an X-Ray room where the staff member will explain the procedure and ask you to confirm your name, address and birth date. During an X-Ray, you may be asked to lie on a table or stand against a flat surface, so that the part of your body being examined can be positioned in the right place. The X-Ray machine will be carefully aimed at the part of the body being examined. The staff will take the image from behind a protective screen. The X-Ray will last for a fraction of a second. You will not feel anything while it is carried out. You must keep as still as possible, so the image produced is not blurred.

What does the X-Ray room look like?



Results

You will not receive any results from your imaging at the time of your procedure. The X-Ray images will be reviewed by a health professional trained in X-Ray reporting, and the results will be sent to the person who requested the images.

The Radiographer or assistant practitioner will explain to you how you will receive your results and how long it will take. This may be different for each patient, but you can expect your results to be with your doctor or healthcare professional in approximately 5 to 10 working days.

Follow up imaging

In some cases, you may be asked to attend for further imaging e.g. Computed Tomography (CT) scan after a chest X-Ray. This is because the person who has reported your X-Ray may feel more detailed imaging is required to provide further information on your condition. The scan will be arranged by Radiology and the results will go back to the person who sent you for your X-Ray. Sometimes the results may show something which needs further investigation by a specialist, e.g. a lung physician. This will be arranged through the hospital, and you will be invited to attend a clinic appointment.

Contact Information

If you have any queries regarding the examination, or suggestions on how we may improve any aspect of our service, please do not hesitate to speak to us either on the day of your examination or contact us on 01942 822409 (Monday to Friday 9:00am to 5:00pm).

Relatives and Escorts

You can bring a relative or friend with you to the Radiology Department, however they will not normally be allowed in the examination room.

Children/vulnerable adults

Please be aware that the department does not have the facilities to supervise children / vulnerable adults. If you need to bring a child or vulnerable adult with you, you must bring an appropriate adult to supervise them whilst you are having the examination.

Interpreters

If you require an interpreter, please contact the department before you begin your preparation, so that this can be arranged. (Please Note: Hospital policy states that relatives cannot act as interpreters).



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