

What is a Diagnostic x-ray?

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An X-Ray is the most frequently used form of medical imaging. It is a painless, non-intrusive exam used to detect conditions of bones. (An x-ray is used to make images of any bone in the body including wrist, arm, foot, leg, and spine.) X-rays are a form of electromagnetic radiation that emits a small burst of photons that passes through the body to record an image which is then recorded onto a computer or photographic film.

Different parts of the body absorb the x-rays in varying degrees. Dense bone absorbs much of the radiation while soft tissue, such as muscle, fat and organs, allow more of the x-rays to pass through them. As a result, bones appear white on the x-ray, soft tissue shows up in shades of gray and air appears black – making it easy to differentiate the various parts of the body and identify bone abnormalities or injuries.

Special care is taken to use the lowest dose of radiation possible. Today's advanced x-ray systems have significant filtration and dose control methods to minimize stray or scatter radiation. This ensures those parts of the body not being imaged receive minimal radiation exposure.

How is the procedure performed?

The x-ray is performed at the hospital's radiology department – with locations at JFK Medical Center and its Muhlenberg Campus in Plainfield.

A radiology technologist, specially trained and certified in diagnostic radiology and imaging, conducts the x-ray exam. The patient is positioned on the x-ray table and an x-ray film holder or digital recording plate is placed under the table in the area of the body being imaged. A lead apron may be placed over the patient's chest and pelvic area to protect these areas from radiation.

The patient must hold very still and may be asked to hold his/her breath for a few seconds while the x-ray picture is taken to reduce the possibility of a blurred image. The technologist will walk behind a wall or into the next room to activate the x-ray machine.

The patient may be repositioned so that an x-ray of the targeted area can be taken at a different angle.

What will I experience during and after the x-ray exam?

An x-ray exam is a painless procedure. However, patients may be asked to stay still in awkward positions for a short period of time. Additionally, patients may experience some discomfort due to medical condition, from the cool temperature in the exam room or the hardness of the exam table.

What are common uses of X-rays?

An x-ray is used to diagnose myriad medical conditions of bones, including:

- fracture or dislocation of the bone
- proper alignment and stabilization of the bone following treatment
- injury or damage from infection, arthritis, abnormal bone growths, osteoporosis and other bone diseases or conditions.
- location of foreign objects

How should I prepare for the procedure?

Most x-rays do not require special preparation. The patient may be asked to remove some or all clothing and wear a gown during the exam. Patients will be asked to remove jewelry, eye glasses and any metal objects or piece of clothing that might interfere with the x-ray images. Women should inform their physician or x-ray technologist as to the possibility of pregnancy as most imaging tests are not performed during pregnancy as radiation can cause harm to the fetus. If an x-ray is necessary, precautions will be taken to minimize radiation exposure to the baby.

Locations:

JFK Medical Center - 65 James Street, Edison, NJ

Muhlenberg Campus - Park Avenue & Randolph Road Plainfield, NJ

For additional information, please call **732.321.7000 ext. 61438**.

For on-line scheduling of an X-ray, please **888.535.6762**.