



Chest X-ray

This brochure tells you about a Chest x-ray, the benefits and the risks, what happens before, during and after having a Chest x-ray.

What is a Chest X-ray?

Chest x-rays use a special type of radiation to take pictures of the chest, including the heart, lungs, airway, and blood vessels. You will be placed between the x-ray tube and a receiving plate which makes the picture.

Chest x-rays are the most common x-rays performed and are usually used to look at:

- Reasons for chest pain, long term or bad cough and shortness of breath
- Fractures of ribs
- Heart problems
- Lung problems



Benefits of Chest X-rays

- Painless, fast and easy
- **No radiation** is left in your body after the x-ray is finished

Risks of Chest X-rays

Your doctor knows the risks of having a chest x-ray. Your doctor will consider the risks before recommending you to have a chest x-ray. Possible risks are:

- Not recommended for pregnant women.
- Very small chance you could develop cancer in the long term from the radiation.

Preparation

- Bring your referral letter or request form and all x-rays taken in the last 2 years with you.
- Leave the x-rays with the radiology staff as the doctor may need to look at them. The radiology staff will tell you when these are ready to be picked up.
- Leave all jewellery and valuables at home.

Just before the X-ray:

- There is no special preparation for chest x-rays.
- You may be given a gown to wear.
- You may be asked to remove any metal objects.

Important to tell your doctor before the Chest X-ray

- If you are or may be pregnant.
- If you have difficulty taking a deep breath and holding your breath.

What happens during a chest x-ray?

X-ray staff will ask you to stand with your chest against the x-ray plate. If you cannot stand, you will be asked to lie on a table. Two pictures may be taken, one from the back and one from the side.

Once you are ready, the x-ray staff will go behind a screen or into the next room to start the x-ray machine. They will ask you to be still, take a deep breath and hold your breath during the x-rays.

When your x-ray is finished you will be asked to wait while the x-ray staff check the pictures, as you may need another x-ray.

The x-ray usually takes about 15 minutes including time taken to get ready.

Consent

You have the right to refuse an examination and may do so if you wish. A written consent is generally not required for chest x-rays.

When will I get the results?

The amount of time it takes for you to get your results will differ depending on where you get your scans done. The radiology doctor will look at the pictures and write a report. The pictures may be on films or on a CD.

Ask whether you should wait to take the pictures and report with you, or whether they will be sent to your doctor.

Your doctor will need to discuss the report with you. You will need to make an appointment to do this.

After the Chest X-ray

You will be able to go soon after the chest x-ray is finished and can continue with normal activities.

Costs

For an Australian patient in a Public Hospital in Western Australia

- Public patient – No cost to you unless advised otherwise
- Private patient – Costs can be claimed through Medicare and your health insurance provider

For a patient in a Private Hospital or Private Imaging Site in Western Australia or a patient outside Western Australia

- Ask your doctor or the staff where you are having your test done what the cost will be

Further Information

For more detailed information, please see [Inside Radiology](#), a resource produced especially for consumers by the [Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Radiologists](#).

If you would like to look at other relevant brochures, please see

- [Plain x-ray](#)
- [Radiation risks of x-rays and scans](#)

Or log into the Diagnostic Imaging Pathways website - www.imagingpathways.health.wa.gov.au/includes/consumer.html

or

If you have questions or require any further information please contact your doctor or speak to the staff where you are going to have your procedure.

Consumer Participation

This information has been reviewed by representatives from the following groups:

- Aboriginal people
- People with disabilities
- Seniors
- CALD (Culturally and Linguistically Diverse)
- The Health Consumers' Council.

Feedback

The Division of Imaging Services, Royal Perth Hospital is committed to providing a friendly and professional service. If you would like to provide feedback on this information sheet, please send to:

Quality Coordinator
Imaging Services
Royal Perth Hospital
GPO Box X2213
Perth WA 6000

Website

For more information go to www.imagingpathways.health.wa.gov.au

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