

## What is an X-ray Examination?

### PATIENT/FAMILY INFORMATION SHEET

## What is an X-ray Examination?

X-rays are a form of energy that exists in nature. They emanate from outer space, rocks, and even soil. An x-ray examination is a simple, painless test that uses x-rays to take pictures of the inside of your body to help your doctor make a diagnosis. The type of x-ray exam your doctor orders is determined by the type of information he or she needs to help make a diagnosis and the part of your body about which information is needed.

## How do I prepare for an x-ray examination?

Preparation for your x-ray exam varies depending upon which test has been ordered by your doctor. The following are some preparation points that may vary depending upon the part of the body to be x-rayed:

- You will be asked to undress the area of your body to be examined. A hospital gown will be provided to you if needed.
- You may be asked to remove metal items such as jewelry, eyeglasses, and clothing with zippers or metal snaps. If not removed, these items may show up on the x-ray images and obscure the exam.
- You will be given a lead apron to wear for protection of parts of the body that are not to be x-rayed.
- Before some types of x-ray exams, you may be given a liquid to drink or you may receive an injection of fluid called contrast medium. These materials help to provide a clearer image of the body part being examined. **Let the x-ray technologist know before your examination if you have a history of allergies to x-ray contrast medium or dye.**

## **How is an x-ray examination performed?**

- Depending upon the part of the body to be x-rayed, you may be asked either to lie on a table, sit, or stand while the images are taken.
- The x-ray technologist will help position you for the exam.
- The technologist will then point the x-ray machine at the area of your body to be examined. You may be asked to hold your breath while the image is obtained. The technologist may take one or multiple images depending upon what your doctor has ordered.
- It is important to remain very still while the x-ray is being taken to prevent blurring of the image.
- After your x-ray exam is completed, you generally dress and return to your normal activities.

## **Is an x-ray safe?**

The x-ray machine produces an x-ray beam which is carefully aimed on and limited to the body part being examined. No radiation remains in your body after the examination.

X-ray imaging is useful to diagnose bone fractures, infections, arthritis, cancer, and other illnesses and conditions.

For female patients, **if there is any possibility you may be pregnant or if you are breast feeding, it is important to tell this to the technologist before the examination.**

Speak with the x-ray technologist if you have questions or concerns regarding the examination. A formal report will be sent to your doctor within days following your procedure and he or she will speak with you regarding the results.

Source: Greenwich Hospital Radiology Department  
Mayo Clinic Medical Services @ [www.mayoclinic.com](http://www.mayoclinic.com) Retrieved 3/05.

*For more Patient Fact Sheets, see the Greenwich Hospital web site at [www.greenhosp.org](http://www.greenhosp.org) and Click on Patients & Visitors, then Patient Education*

REV 6/05, 8/05, 1/07