PREPARING FOR THE EXAM

Radiography, or x-ray, as it is most commonly known, is the oldest and most frequently used form of medical imaging. Discovered more than a century ago, x-rays can produce diagnostic images of the human body on film or digitally on a computer screen.

X-ray imaging is the fastest and easiest way for a physician to view and assess broken bones, such as skull fractures and spine injuries. At least two images (from different angles) are taken and often three images are needed if the problem is around a joint (knee, elbow or wrist).

X-rays also play a key role in guiding orthopedic surgery and in the treatment of sports-related injuries. X-ray may uncover more advanced forms of cancer in bones, although early screening for cancer findings requires other methods.

There is no special preparation required for most bone radiographs. Once you arrive, you may be asked to change into a gown before your examination.

You also will be asked to remove jewelry, eyeglasses and any metal objects that could show up on the images and overlap important findings. Women should always inform their doctor or x-ray technologist if there is any possibility that they are pregnant.

The exam normally will not take more than 20 minutes, and usually will take a shorter amount of time.

Humboldt General Hospital provides state-of-the-art radiology services to men, women and children of all ages. Ensuring the most accurate diagnostic results is our goal. Services are performed in a timely and compassionate manner; meeting our patients’ needs is our top priority.

Every member of Humboldt General Hospital’s radiology team has achieved his or her registry through the American Registry of Radiologic Technologists (ARRT). Registration is the one-time process of initially recognizing individuals who have satisfied certain standards within a profession. A person is certified by the ARRT after meeting educational preparation standards, complying with ethics standards, and passing a comprehensive exam.

Clinical excellence is just one part of the department’s three-pronged “Promise to the Community.” Humboldt General Hospital’s Radiology Department also is committed to premium customer service, offering extended evening and weekend hours, as well as the most advanced technology possible for its nine modalities: MRI, CT Scan, X-Ray, Fluoroscopy, Vascular Ultrasound, Obstetrical Ultrasound, Cardiac Ultrasound, Mammography and Bone Densitometry.

We look forward to serving you. Please call Humboldt General Hospital’s Radiology Department at (775) 623-5222, ext. 133, with any questions or concerns you may have, or to schedule an appointment.

“OUR PROMISE TO YOU”

✓ Clinical Excellence
✓ Premium Customer Service
✓ Advanced Technology

48 HR We will have your results back to your doctor within 48 hours.
WHY USE X-RAY?

Probably the most common use of bone radiographs is to assist the physician in identifying and treating fractures. X-ray images of the skull, spine, joints and extremities are performed every minute of every day in hospital emergency rooms, sports medicine centers, orthopedic clinics and physician offices. Images of the injury can show even very fine hairline fractures or bone chips, while images produced after treatment ensure that a fracture has been properly aligned and stabilized for healing. Bone x-rays are essential tools in orthopedic surgery, such as spinal repair, joint replacements or fracture reductions.

X-ray images can be used to diagnose and monitor the progression of degenerative diseases such as arthritis. They also play an important role in the detection and diagnosis of cancer, although usually computed tomography (CT) or MRI is better at defining the extent and the nature of a suspected cancer. On regular x-rays severe osteoporosis can be visible, but bone density determination for early loss of bone mineral is usually done on specialized, more sensitive equipment.

HOW DOES X-RAY WORK?

Radiography involves exposing a part of the body to a small dose of radiation to produce an image of the internal organs. When x-rays penetrate the body, they are absorbed in varying amounts by different tissues. Ribs, for example, are dense and will block much of the radiation and, therefore, appear white or light gray on the image. Soft tissue such as the liver or lungs will appear darker because more radiation can pass through it to expose the film.

HOW WILL THE EXAM HELP?

From broken bones to signs of cancer, early diagnosis and treatment make a big difference in treating or preventing illnesses from becoming worse. X-rays provide your physician with useful information regarding what is going on inside your body.

HOW IS X-RAY PERFORMED?

The technologist positions the patient on the examination table, places a film holder ( cassette) under the table in the area of the body to be imaged. Sandbags or pillows may help the patient hold the proper position. Then the technologist steps behind a radiation barrier and asks the patient to hold very still without breathing for a few seconds. The radiographic equipment is activated, sending a beam of x-rays through the body to expose the film. The technologist then repositions the patient for another view, and the process is repeated.

When your x-rays are completed you will be asked to wait until the technologist checks the images for adequate exposure and motion.

WHAT WILL I EXPERIENCE?

X-ray imaging itself is painless. Some discomfort may result from lying on the table, a hard surface that may feel quite cold. Sometimes, to get a clear image of an injury such as a possible fracture, you may be asked to hold an uncomfortable position for a short time. Any movement could blur the image and make it necessary to repeat the procedure to get a useful, clear picture.

HOW DO I GET THE RESULTS?

A radiologist, a physician experienced in bone x-ray and all other types of radiology examinations, will analyze the images and send a signed report to your primary care or referring physician, who will inform you on your test results.