

# Chest X-Ray

A chest X-ray is a painless test that uses radiation to create images of the structures inside of your chest. Chest X-rays are used to look for many health conditions, including heart failure, pneumonia, tuberculosis, rib fractures, breathing disorders, and cancer. They may be used to diagnose chest pain, constant coughing, or trouble breathing.

## Tell a health care provider about:

- Any allergies you have.
- All medicines you are taking, including vitamins, herbs, eye drops, creams, and over-the-counter medicines.
- Any surgeries you have had.
- Any medical conditions you have.
- Whether you are pregnant or may be pregnant.

## What are the risks?

Getting a chest X-ray is a safe procedure. However, you will be exposed to a small amount of radiation.

Being exposed to too much radiation over a lifetime can increase the risk of cancer. This risk is small, but it may occur if you have many X-rays throughout your life.

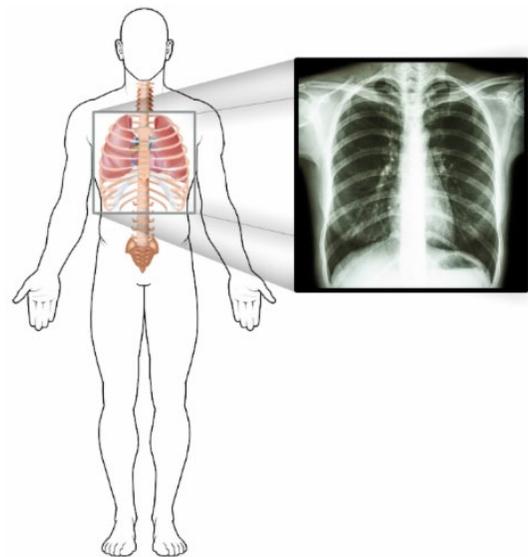
## What happens before the procedure?

- You may be asked to remove glasses, jewelry, and any other metal objects.
- You will be asked to undress from the waist up. You may be given a hospital gown to wear.
- You may be asked to wear a protective lead apron to protect parts of your body from radiation.

## What happens during the procedure?

- You will be asked to stand still as each picture is taken to get the best possible images.
- You will be asked to take a deep breath and hold your breath for a few seconds.
- The X-ray machine will create a picture of your chest using a tiny burst of radiation. This is painless.
- More pictures may be taken from other angles. Typically, one picture will be taken while you face the X-ray camera, and another picture will be taken from the side while you stand. If you cannot stand, you may be asked to lie down.

The procedure may vary among health care providers and hospitals.



## What happens after the procedure?

- The X-ray(s) will be reviewed by your health care provider or an X-ray (*radiology*) specialist.
- It is up to you to get your test results. Ask your health care provider, or the department that is doing the test, when your results will be ready.
- Your health care provider will tell you if you need more tests or a follow-up exam. Keep all follow-up visits as told by your health care provider. This is important.

## Summary

- A chest X-ray is a safe, painless test that is used to examine the inside of the chest, heart, and lungs.
- You will need to undress from the waist up and remove jewelry and metal objects before the procedure.
- You will be exposed to a small amount of radiation during the procedure.
- The X-ray machine will take one or more pictures of your chest while you remain as still as possible.
- Later, a health care provider or specialist will review the test results with you.

This information is not intended to replace advice given to you by your health care provider. Make sure you discuss any questions you have with your health care provider.