

My baby and X-rays on the Neonatal Unit

Information for parents and carers



Why do we need to X-ray your baby?

We may need to take an X-ray of your baby for many reasons. We use these images to identify and diagnose what is causing symptoms, ensure the correct positioning of lines and tubes as well as to monitor the progress of known concerns. Chest and abdomen exams are the most common on the unit and they will give the clinicians lots of information about the health of your baby.

All examinations will have to be 'justified' by the Doctors and 'accepted' by the Radiographers to ensure that the imaging exam will do more good than harm. In addition to this our Radiographers take great care to ensure that your baby is receiving the smallest dose of radiation possible.

How much radiation is used for an X-ray?

We have worked closely with our Radiologists to find a good balance between using the lowest possible dose and creating diagnostic quality images. For a single chest x-ray, we use a radiation level similar to a 3-hour plane flight, or 1 day of background radiation. The radiation does not stay in your baby's body once the X-ray is over.

Benefits vs Risk: X-rays for babies

On average in the UK, 1 in 2 people will develop cancer in their lifetime. X-ray exams may slightly increase the normal lifetime chance of developing cancer later in life. When X-ray exams are needed for diagnosis of an illness or injury and are performed appropriately then the benefits can far outweigh the radiation risk.

How is an X-ray taken on my baby?

X-rays can be taken on babies in the Neonatal Unit without them having to leave the ward.

A portable X-ray machine is used while the baby stays in the incubator or cot. While this is happening both staff and family members will need to be at least 1 meter away. Sometimes if the baby is very active, then a nurse or a family member might need to put on a lead coat to help hold the baby still.



Additional information

X-ray Examinations in Children (WHO Information)

Website: cdn.who.int/media/docs/default-source/documents/radiation/x-ray-exams-children-leaflet.pdf?sfvrsn=2a85bfaf_2



CT Scans in Children (WHO Information)

Website: cdn.who.int/media/docs/default-source/documents/radiation/computed-tomography-in-children-leaflet.pdf?sfvrsn=49535353_2



X-Ray Guided Interventions in Children (WHO Information)

Website: cdn.who.int/media/docs/default-source/documents/radiation/x-ray-guided-interventions-in-children.pdf?sfvrsn=c487a610_2



Nuclear Medicine Examinations in Children (WHO Information)

Website: cdn.who.int/media/docs/default-source/documents/radiation/nuclear-medicine-exams-in-children.pdf?sfvrsn=7c50bf91_2



Further information

If you would like an interpreter, please speak to the department where you are being seen.

Please also tell them if you would like this information in another format, such as:

- Easy Read
- large print
- braille
- audio
- electronic
- another language.

We have tried to make the information in this leaflet meet your needs. If it does not meet your individual needs or situation, please speak to your healthcare team. They are happy to help.

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