

Radiology

X-rays of your child's bones (skeletal survey examination)

Information for parents/guardians

A skeletal survey examination has been requested by your child's doctor.

This information explains what a skeletal survey examination involves. If you have any questions or concerns, please ask your doctor or a member of the Radiology team.

Referral and consent

Your doctor should have talked to you about why your child needs this examination and explained the procedure to you. You will be required to sign a consent form.

If you do not want to have the procedure, your doctor will talk to you about the risks and benefits again. You can decide against it, but your doctor will need to discuss your decision not to consent with Social Care. Sometimes we may use a court order so that the skeletal survey can go ahead.

If you need a translator before and during the examination, please let staff know before so that this does not cause any delays.



What is a skeletal survey?

This is an X-ray examination of some of the bones in the body. This includes X-rays of your child's chest, arms, and legs. It is mainly used to look for broken bones.

The examination is performed by two trained X-ray specialists (radiographers). It may take up to one hour to complete, depending on the age and mobility of your child.

Risks/benefits of procedure

X-rays are a type of radiation. We are all exposed to natural background radiation in our everyday lives. This comes from the sun, the food we eat, and the ground. Exposure to X-rays carries a small risk, but it is felt that this risk is outweighed by the benefits of having the test. We will take all the proper measures to minimise the amount of X-rays that your child receives.

Having an X-ray carries a very small risk of cancer occurring many years or decades after the exposure. This risk depends upon the dose of radiation received.

By supporting a patient during their X-ray, you may receive a small dose of radiation. You will be given a lead apron to wear. This is to make sure that this dose is much lower than the patient, so that the risk to you is minimal.

If you are, or think you may be pregnant, you should not stay in the room during the procedure.

Preparation

- A trained nurse will take you and your child to the department and will stay with them throughout the procedure.
- You are welcome to wait in the radiology reception during the examination.
- If you would prefer, you may also stay with your child during the examination. Please be aware that it takes a long time and can be

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distressing and upsetting for you and possibly for your child. Our aim is to best serve the welfare and wellbeing of your child at all times.

- If you wish to be present during the procedure, you must fully understand the extent and nature of the examination.
- If you have a very young child, it is often a good idea to feed them just before attending the department for the examination.
- If they have a favourite toy or soother, it is a good idea to bring this along for your child.
- Please make sure that your child has a hospital wristband on. Their identity will need to be confirmed by the radiographers before the examination.

During the examination

A parent or guardian can stay during the procedure, but it is not essential.

As the examination uses X-rays, you will need to wear a lead apron to minimise the radiation dose. You must also read the patient information leaflet titled: '[X-rays: Information for patient supporters.](#)' Please ask radiology staff for a copy of this information.

If you are or think you may be pregnant, you should not stay in the room during the procedure.

Clothing, nappies, jewellery, and any other items will be removed whilst your child is being imaged. These may show up on the X-rays. We will only expose the part of the body that is being imaged at that time. We will try and make sure your child is warm and covered where possible during the examination.

Your child will need to be held still when the X-rays are taken or the images will be blurred. This will involve the ward nurse and/or parent/guardian holding your child gently but firmly. Sometimes we use soft sponge pads or sandbags to help.

Keeping your child still for the procedure is really important. We'll let you know if we need to do this. We may also try to distract your child.

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After the examination

Your child will need to stay in the department whilst the images are reviewed by a consultant radiologist (X-ray specialist doctor). This will only take a few minutes and it's to make sure that:

- the images are of good quality, and
- to see if any more images are needed at that time.

You and your child will then either go back to the ward or you will be allowed home.

There may be times when your child becomes so distressed that the examination cannot continue. In these cases, the radiographers will contact the referring doctor to discuss the options of postponing or cancelling the examination.

Sometimes, medication can be used to make your child sleepy (sedation). If this is the case the doctor will talk to you. You will have to give consent before the medicine can be given.

Results

The consultant radiologist will provide a written report on the hospital computer system. This will form part of your child's medical record. The doctor who referred your child for the examination will discuss the results with you.

More X-rays or scans may be needed after a full review.

More scans such as a brain CT scan may have also been requested. If this is the case, we'll try to carry out both examinations during the same visit to minimise any distress to your child.

Follow up

Your child will need some more X-rays 11-14 days after the initial skeletal survey.

An appointment will be made for these before your child is discharged home. These include chest X-rays and more X-rays of the limbs if necessary.

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If you have any further questions or queries:

Please contact us and we will be happy to help.

Radiology Department

024 7696 3000 or 024 7696 7114

Monday – Friday, 9am – 5pm

The Trust has access to interpreting and translation services. If you need this information in another language or format, please contact us on 024 7696 7114 and we will do our best to meet your needs.

The Trust operates a smoke free policy.

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