X-ray

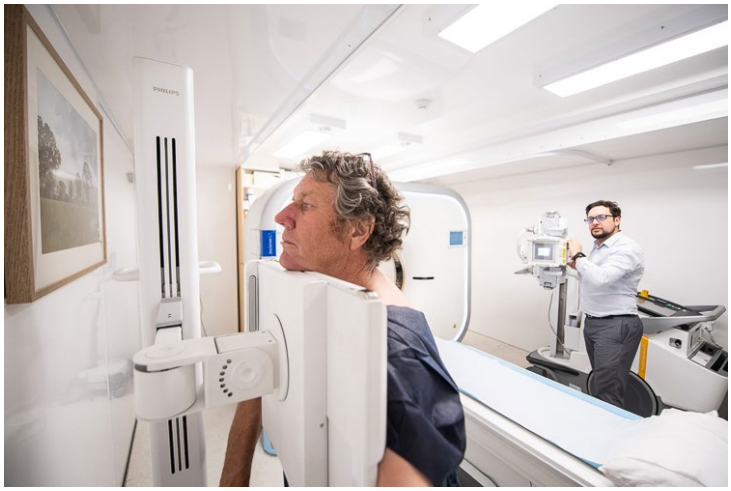
What is an x-ray?

X-ray is used to look at the internal structures within your body, especially your bones. An x-ray beam is sent through your body and the structures within absorb the beam in different ways, depending on the density of the structure. The imaging plate on the other side of your body measures the remaining density of the beam as it comes through your body. Dense objects, such as bone, are white on an x-ray. Air, such as your lungs, are black. Soft tissue structures are different shades of grey.

Why would I need an x-ray?

Your doctors may request for you to have an x-ray to assist with the diagnosis of injury or disease. Examples of why you may be advised to have an x-ray may include but are not limited to:

- Bone fractures or infections
- Arthritis or Osteoporosis
- Lung or cardiac conditions
- Cancer
- Foreign Body
- Digestive tract issues



How to prepare for an x-ray?

When the Heart of Australia team call you to arrange an appointment, they will advise if there is any preparation required for your x-ray.

Generally, there is nothing to do in preparation.

What happens during an x-ray?

The radiographer will advise you at the start of your appointment if you need to change into a gown. This happens if there is a chance of metal in your clothing obscuring the area being x-rayed. They may ask you to remove your jewellery for the same reason.

Depending on the area being x-rayed you may be asked to be seated, stand against the imaging plate, or lay on the table. Because x-rays are only two dimensional, the radiographer will often take more than one image of the region of interest from different angles.

In some instances, you may be asked to hold your breath in for a short time.

It is important to stay still during the x-ray. Think of it like you're taking a photo – if you move, the x-ray will be blurry.

What are the risks with x-ray?

X-ray does use ionising radiation. This type of radiation is associated with cancer. The amount of radiation you are exposed to during an x-ray depends on the region being imaged. However in general, an x-ray dose is extremely low and considered very safe for most people.

If you do suspect you are pregnant, please inform your radiographer PRIOR to having an x-ray.