

Do all babies need an x-ray?

Your baby's doctors will make the decision as to whether an x-ray is necessary for your baby.

X-rays are very helpful in giving a diagnosis. X-rays require a low dose of radiation so careful thought is always given to the need of an x-ray. X-rays will not be taken unnecessarily.

Why does my baby need an x-ray?

To look at:

- Skeleton (bones)
- Baby's heart: size, position and for signs any significant abnormality
- Lungs : for any signs of infection
 - exclude a pneumothorax (collapsed lung)
 - confirm a diagnosis
- Abdomen: to exclude an infection or obstruction

To check the position of:

- Endotracheal tube (ETT – the breathing tube in baby's mouth leading into the lungs).
- Naso-gastric tube (tube used for feeding leading from the nose to the stomach)
- Oro-gastric tube (tube used for feeding leading from the mouth to the stomach)
- UVC/UAC Lines placed in the blood vessels in the umbilicus (tummy button)
- Long line inserted into baby's foot or hand leading to the vessels just before the heart, used for giving nutritious fluids (TPN) directly into baby's body

When the x-ray is taken:

For the x-ray to be taken your baby will need to be kept calm. Your baby may need their position altered for the x-ray to be taken. They will also

need to be placed on a x-ray cassette and be held still to obtain a good image. Your baby will be supported by one of the nurses.

The nurse and the radiographer will be wearing a lead apron to protect them as they are exposed to numerous x-ray exposures at work. To reduce your exposure to x-rays you should leave the room (if possible) whilst the x-ray is being taken.



Why does my baby need another x-ray?

Another x-ray may be taken in order to assess whether your baby is improving or deteriorating, or after any IV lines or endotracheal tube have been re-inserted or repositioned.

As x-rays require a very low dose of radiation, careful thought is always given to the necessity of an x-ray.

Sometimes more complex x-ray studies may need to be taken. These studies are usually done in the radiology department. Your baby will be accompanied to the radiology department by NICU staff. The x-ray studies will be explained to you separately.