

# Chest X-ray

## Information for Patients

Your GP has referred you for a Chest X-ray which is in area D at Northampton General Hospitals NHS Trust. You do not need to make an appointment as the department operates a walk in service 08:30 – 16:00 Monday to Friday.

Please attend as soon as you can as this will speed up your diagnosis.

## What should you expect when you come for your Chest X-ray?

We try to see patients as quickly as possible but sometimes there may be an unavoidable delay but our staff will keep you informed. You will be asked to take everything off above your waist and put on a Hospital gown. This is to ensure that the X-ray image is clear of external objects such as zips, buttons and buckles.

## Is my X-ray examination safe?

Since radiation is used there is a small risk. All procedures are carried out under strict control to ensure that the radiation dose used to capture the image is as low and safe as possible.

We receive a small dose of radiation every day from our environment. A chest X-ray dose is equivalent to three days of natural background radiation.

## How long will it take?

Typically it will only take a couple of minutes to have the chest X-ray done. Occasionally, depending on how busy the department is, you may have to wait a short time to be seen. You can go home straight after the chest X-ray.

## What happens after my x-ray?

Your GP will receive the result of your chest X-ray electronically within 7 days, please contact the surgery for the result.

Occasionally we may see something on the X-ray which requires further investigation, there are many possible

reasons but it is important as for some people it could be something serious possibly lung cancer. You could be called back for a repeat chest X-Ray or a CT Scan. If a CT scan is required you will be called back within a few days.

**If you are called back for a CT scan please contact your GP so that you understand why. It is important that you attend for the CT scan.**

## What is a CT scan?

CT stands for Computed Tomography. This is a scanning procedure that uses a combination of X-Rays and a computer to provide detailed images of your body.

## What does a CT scan show?

A CT scan provides images of thin sections through your body. Images can be adjusted to enhance the detail of the area we are examining.

## Before the CT scan

You may need to have a blood test prior to the scan if this is the case we will let you know.

## During the CT scan

When you have a CT scan you need to lie on a table. The scanner is rather like a giant "polo mint". It has a hole through which the table will pass during the scan. The scanner is open at each end and you are not closed in. The CT scan will require you to have an injection of X-Ray contrast which further enhances the images.

## You will need to remain still during the scan

This is important because any movement will cause the CT images to blur and the scan may need to be repeated.

During the scan you will hear a small amount of noise from the scanner as it performs the scan and you will be asked to hold your breath. Several sets of images

may be taken and there will be short periods between each set as the radiographer is setting up for the next set of images.

## What if I need someone with me during the scan?

A patient will only be escorted into the CT scanner under exceptional circumstances, e.g. a very young child, as X-radiation is used for the scan. It is better to avoid exposing other people to this unless it is absolutely necessary. The radiographer performing the scan will usually decide this. They will make sure you are as comfortable as possible.

## What happens after my CT?

Your GP will receive the result of your CT within 7 days. They will contact you to discuss the results and your next steps. You may be contacted by the hospital to advise you to attend an outpatient appointment. Please make every effort to attend this appointment — it is important to rule out any suggestion of lung cancer.

If you are called back for an outpatient appointment and you have not heard from your GP please contact your GP so that you can understand why you have been asked to attend this appointment.

Macmillan Cancer Information & Support Centre  
Northampton Centre for Oncology  
Northampton General Hospital  
01604544211  
Mon - Fri 10am - 4pm

The Macmillan Information Centre is based in the Centre for Oncology at Northampton General Hospital NHS Trust. It is run by the Macmillan Information & Support Lead who offers information, help and practical support to patients/carers. The Macmillan Information & Support Lead can also signpost to other services in the area such as support groups.

## Useful websites

[www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)

[www.northamptongeneral.nhs.uk](http://www.northamptongeneral.nhs.uk)

## Other information

Northampton General Hospital operates a smoke-free policy. This means that smoking is not allowed anywhere on the Trust site, this includes all buildings, grounds and car parks.

Leaflets, information, advice and support on giving up smoking and on nicotine replacement therapy are available from the local Stop Smoking helpline on 0845 6013116, the free national helpline on 0300 123 1044, email: [smokefree@nhft.nhs.uk](mailto:smokefree@nhft.nhs.uk) and pharmacies.

Car parking at Northampton General Hospital is extremely limited and it is essential to arrive early, allowing ample time for parking. You may find it more convenient to be dropped off and collected.

This information can be provided in other languages and formats upon request including Braille, audio cassette and CD. Please contact (01604) 523442 or the Patient Advice & Liaison Service (PALS) on (01604) 545784, email: [pals@ngh.nhs.uk](mailto:pals@ngh.nhs.uk)