X-ray

X-rays help providers visualize the inside of your body. The tissues in the body have different densities which affects how much radiation they absorb. This variance produces a grayscale image that allows physicians to distinguish between different anatomical structures.

X-rays are a type of high-energy electromagnetic radiation that produce an image of our internal anatomy. They are best adapted for visualizing structures that absorb different amounts of radiation. Structures that absorb more x-rays will appear white (e.g. bone), whereas structures that absorb less x-rays will appear darker (e.g. soft tissue).

Why X-rays?
X-rays are useful for visualizing soft tissues against air, or tumors that have invaded bone. Patients with head and neck cancer often undergo x-rays to identify lung metastasis, or spread, as a lung nodule shows up clearly on an x-ray. For this reason, your doctor may recommend an annual chest x-ray if you have a history of head and neck cancer.

What to Expect
X-ray imaging can be done wherever an x-ray machine is available. This could be at your doctor’s office or in a hospital. You will lie on a table or stand against a wall while the images are created. The technician will likely step out of the room and turn on the x-ray machine from behind a protective wall to avoid radiation exposure which, although relatively low in x-ray, can be damaging in high doses. When the technician takes the pictures, you will not feel anything, and the process will take just a few moments.

Advantages
X-ray imaging is non-invasive, inexpensive, and performed quickly and easily. X-rays are a painless procedure for patients.

Disadvantages
Drawbacks of X-ray imaging include limited ability to detect abnormalities in certain types of tissue and the patient’s exposure to a small amount of radiation. To reduce a patient’s exposure to radiation, a lead apron will cover parts of the body not needed for the X-ray.

Please note that this information is intended for educational purposes. It does not replace consultation with your doctor, and it should not be interpreted as medical advice. We encourage you to speak to your health care provider if you have further questions or concerns regarding your medical care.

For more information scan this code or visit: https://thancguide.org/cancer-basics/diagnosis/imaging/xray/