

Let's Talk About...

Skeletal Survey

A **skeletal survey** is a complete set of x-rays used to check a person's bones. It consists of about 22 images and includes the skull, spine, ribs, chest, pelvis, arms, legs, hands, and feet. Skeletal surveys are done to look for injuries or other conditions that may affect the bones. This will help your child's provider determine the best treatment for your child.

What happens during a skeletal survey?

Your child will lie on an examination table under the x-ray machine. Your child will need to lie still so that the images are clear. The technologist may use a piece of tape, sponges, or towels to help your child remain still. The technologist may need to hold your child still if they move too much.

The technologist(s) will take the x-rays as quickly as possible while ensuring quality images are produced. There are usually 2 radiologic technologists performing the exam. One works on the computer while the other positions and comforts your child during the x-rays. A Child Life Specialist may also be present. The exam may take up to an hour.

Will it hurt my child?

No. The x-rays do not cause any pain. However, some children get upset because they don't like to be held still. If your child has an item such as a special blanket or toy which may help to comfort them, please let the technologist know.



How can I help my child prepare for a skeletal survey?

- If your child is old enough:
 - Tell them that they will need to lie still during the skeletal survey and not move.
 - Talk about how the x-ray machine works. It will take pictures of your child's body, but it will not hurt.
 - Explain that you will wait outside the room during the skeletal survey. If you are in the room, you may distract your child, and the x-rays may turn out blurry.
- Send a comfort item into the room with the technologist and your child.



How much radiation will my child receive?

All x-ray exams expose patients to radiation in varying amounts. Our technologists are educated in **ALARA** (As Low As Reasonably Achievable) and **Image Gently** principles to produce high-quality images using the appropriate exposure factors for the patient's size. If you have concerns about radiation, **ImageGently.org** is a good resource. If you have further concerns, you should discuss these with the healthcare provider who ordered the exam. They can work with a radiologist to determine the best exam for your child.

What happens after the skeletal survey?

Once the technologist takes all the x-rays, a radiologist (x-ray doctor) will look at them. If your child does not need any other x-rays, your child will return to you, and the exam will be finished. The radiologist looks at the x-rays very carefully and sends a report about them to your child's healthcare provider. They will discuss the results with you.

What if I have more questions?

If you have any other questions, ask your child's healthcare provider or the radiologic technologist.

Notes

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