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Hand x-ray

This test is an x-ray of one or both hands.

How the Test is Performed

A hand x-ray is taken in a hospital radiology department or your health care provider's office by an x-ray technician. You will be asked to place your hand on the x-ray table, and keep it very still as the picture is being taken. You may need to change the position of your hand, so more images can be taken.

How to Prepare for the Test

Tell your provider if you are pregnant or think you may be pregnant. Remove all jewelry from your hand and wrist.

How the Test will Feel

Generally, there is little or no discomfort associated with x-rays.

Why the Test is Performed

Hand x-ray is used to detect fractures, tumors, foreign objects, or degenerative conditions of the hand such as osteoarthritis. Hand x-rays may also be done to find out a child's "bone age." This can help determine if a health problem is preventing the child from growing properly or how much growth is left.

What Abnormal Results Mean

Abnormal results may be due to:

- Fractures
- Arthritis
- Bone tumors
- Degenerative bone conditions
- Inflammation of the bone caused by an infection (osteomyelitis)

Risks

There is low radiation exposure. X-rays are monitored and regulated to provide the minimum amount of radiation exposure needed to produce the image. Most experts feel that the risk is low when compared to the benefits. Pregnant women and children are more sensitive to the risks of x-rays.

Alternative Names

X-ray - hand

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