

What to do when you need to have an x-ray, mammogram, bone density test, CT scan or other diagnostic x-ray done:

1. Justification (When your doctor recommends that you get an x-ray):

Ask the doctor:

- Are x-rays truly necessary?
- Are x-rays the best imaging procedures for my condition?
- Have I already had this exact image taken (see point #3)?
- Does the benefit of this exposure substantially outweigh the risks?

Remember to tell your doctor if:

- If there is a possibility you are pregnant; and/or
- If you've had an allergic reaction to a previous exposure of x-ray contrast dye.

If there is a definite clinical reason, the risks of not having your doctor see an x-ray can be greater than the tiny risk of exposure, and it should be done.

2. Optimization (Just before you're about to have an x-ray done):

Ask the radiologist or technologist:

- What techniques do you use to minimize radiation exposure (especially for pregnant women and children)?
- Can you please take the minimum number of images and use doses ALARA (As Low As Reasonably Achievable)?
- What is the most appropriate shielding for this particular image?

Note: As long as the image contains the necessary information, it should NOT be repeated.

3. Keep Records (Right after you had your x-rays done):

Use the record on the next page to track your x-rays. This will help to avoid unnecessary repeat tests.

4. Report Radiation Injuries (After you've had the x-ray done, and only if you suspect an injury is related to the x-ray):

If you suspect a radiation injury related to your x-ray, you should discuss this with your doctor. Also know that both Health Canada's MedEffect and FDA's MedWatch programs accept reports from patients because x-ray machines are regulated medical devices in Canada and the USA.

If you're in Canada:

Call a **Canada Vigilance Regional Office** at **1-866-234-2345** (toll-free).

If you're in the US:

Call the FDA at **1-800-FDA-1088** to report by telephone.



Leesa Klich, MSc, R.H.N. is a health writer and science-based holistic nutritionist. Leesa earned her Master of Science degree in Biomedical Toxicology and Nutrition, and after a short time in food R&D, she had a 12-year career in drug/supplement safety. While Leesa thoroughly enjoyed her time in pharmacovigilance (fancy word for drug safety), several things in her life started pointing toward some of the benefits of a more holistic approach to health. After moving across Canada and graduating as a Registered Holistic Nutritionist, Leesa is blending her extensive experience in health science with her education in holistic nutrition. Leesa likes to say that she lives “at the intersection of science and holistic health, and it’s very interesting here.”

If you'd like Leesa to write for your health and wellness business, you can [reach her here.](#)

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