X-ray (Radiograph) Fact Sheet – What to Know and Expect

Also known as a radiograph, an x-ray is a painless test that produces images of the structures inside the body. An X-ray examination involves positioning the area of the body that is going to be examined between an X-ray device and a digital plate. X-rays pass through the body, and are absorbed by the tissues they pass through. Different parts of the body absorb different amounts of X-rays depending on how dense they are. Dense structures such as bone appear white and less dense structures such as the lungs appear black. In some circumstances, a contrast medium (iodine or barium) is used to improve the image detail. X-rays are often accompanied by blood tests and other diagnostic procedures.

A veterinarian may recommend this test to examine an area where your pet is experiencing pain/discomfort, monitor the progress of a condition, or check how well a prescribed treatment is working. Your pet may receive:

- Abdominal x-rays for suspected intestinal obstruction (foreign body), bladder stones, and tumors.
- Chest x-rays for suspected cancer in the lungs or other organs, heart or lung disease, rib fractures, or the presence of air or fluid in the chest cavity.
- Orthopedic x-rays for suspected fractures, joint disease, and bone deformations such as hip/elbow dysplasia.

Preparation: To prepare for your pet's appointment, read our *Client Preparation Guide*. This procedure requires your pet to remain relaxed and motionless for a period of time, and may require sedation and/or anesthesia. For further information, refer to our Sedation and Anesthetic Fact Sheet. We also recommend all of our clients become familiar with our *Terms and Conditions*.

Process: For scheduled procedures, your pet must be admitted for the day.

1. During admission, we will ask you to sign consent forms for the procedure and address questions you may have.
2. Once admitted, a veterinarian will evaluate your pet, their medical history and lab work, and any radiographs (if applicable).
3. An intravenous catheter will be placed in a leg vein for the administration of anesthetic agents. This requires hair clipping at the site. In rare circumstances, a small area on your pet's chest may also be shaved to place a patch that monitors heart rate.
4. Your pet will then be moved to the imaging suite, positioned, and x-rayed. A specially trained registered veterinary technician will be with your pet during the whole process to monitor their health status.
5. During the procedure, your pet may be placed in various positions to obtain the best quality images.
6. Afterwards, your pet will be brought to our intensive care unit, where a team of veterinarians and registered veterinary technicians will continue to monitor your pet during their recovery.
7. Once a veterinarian has determined that your pet is cleared for discharge, we will call to inform you that your pet is ready to go home.
8. After evaluating all of the information, the radiologist will then be able to make any recommendations on treatment, medication, and/or further diagnostics, and will provide a report to your veterinarian within 24 hours. Your veterinarian will discuss the x-ray findings with you.
9. If additional procedures are required (aspiration or biopsy), you will be contacted prior to the procedure and the benefits/risks and associated costs will be discussed. Any additional results will be forwarded to your veterinarian when they are received.