Chest X-ray
How to prepare for your procedure

What is a chest X-ray?
A chest X-ray is done to assess the lungs, heart and chest wall. Pneumonia, heart failure, emphysema, lung cancer and other medical problems can be diagnosed or suspected on a chest X-ray.

How does the exam work?
Radiography involves exposing a part of the body to a small dose of radiation to produce an image of the internal organs.

How should I prepare for the exam?
Chest X-rays require no special preparation. Tell your doctor or X-ray technologist if there is any chance that you may be pregnant.

How is the exam performed?
1. You will need to remove your clothing, including undergarments that may contain metal. You will be given a loose-fitting gown to wear.
2. You will be asked to remove all metallic jewelry that may obstruct the X-rays.
3. Normally, a frontal view is obtained, in which you stand with your chest pressed to the plate, with hands on hips and elbows pushed in front. Some X-ray machines are designed for patients who cannot stand.
4. The technologist will ask you to be still, to take a deep breath, and hold it. Breath-holding, after a deep breath, reduces the chance of a blurred image and also improves the quality of the X-ray image.
Questions?

Your questions are important. Call your doctor or health care provider if you have questions or concerns. Clinic staff are also available to help.

☐ UWMC Imaging Services:
206-598-6200

☐ Harborview Imaging Services:
206-744-3105

What will I feel during the exam?

Chest X-ray is a painless exam. Slight discomfort may come from the cold plate against your chest. People with arthritis or injuries to the chest wall, shoulders, or arms may have discomfort trying to hold a position for the chest X-ray. In these cases, the X-ray technologist will help you to find a better position.

Who interprets the results and how do I get them?

A radiologist is a doctor skilled in chest X-ray and all other types of radiology exams. The radiologist will review your results, and will send a report to your primary care or referring doctor, who will give you your results. The radiologist does not discuss the results with you.