

➤ CT head

A CT scan (computerised tomography) is a special kind of X-ray that records a series of slice pictures to give a detailed picture of the brain. A CT scan is a very short procedure taking only a few minutes. Your child will need to lie still on the CT bed. A CT involves 12-18 months of background radiation.

➤ MRI head

An MRI scan doesn't involve X-rays and provides a detailed picture of the brain. An MRI takes longer than a CT scan and the child is required to be completely still to ensure good quality images. Children need to have medication by mouth to make them sleepy for the scan to be done. They will not be able to eat or drink for 6 hours before having the sedative medication.

**If you have any further questions,
please ask the doctor looking after
your child.**

Patient advice and liaison service (PALS)
If you have a compliment, complaint or concern please contact our PALS team on 020 7288 5551 or whh-tr.whitthealthPALS@nhs.net

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Skeletal Survey **X-rays / Head scans**

Information for families



What is a skeletal survey?

A skeletal survey is a top to toe radiological examination to check your child's bones for any breaks or obvious bony disease.

A skeletal survey involves around 30 X-rays to ensure that all the bones and joints are seen.

Follow up X-rays are taken 11 - 14 days after the first set of X-rays. This is usually about 12 X-rays.

The paediatrician looking after your child will be able to explain to you why your child needs to have a skeletal survey.

Are there any risks?

Your child will be exposed to radiation during the study. This is often measured as an equivalent of background radiation. Background radiation is the very low dose of radiation we are exposed to naturally every day of our lives.

A skeletal survey involves exposure to an extra 2 months of background radiation.

We take the care to keep radiation doses as low as possible.

The x rays are not painful, but your child will need to be held still in different positions whilst the X-rays are taken, and they may be distressed by this.

Where will it take place?

The X-rays will be carried out in the X-Ray department at the Whittington Hospital.

Who will be doing the skeletal survey?

They will be performed by radiologists who are experienced in this procedure.

How long will it take?

It will take around an hour. Sometimes extra X-rays may be needed after the X-rays have been reviewed.

Can I stay with my child?

Yes, if you wish. A staff member from the ward will be with your child at all times, caring for them and ensuring the examination goes smoothly.

How to prepare

No special preparation is needed other than removing any jewellery or metal for example clothes with poppers.

The results

The images will be looked at by two consultant radiologists (doctors who are expert at looking at X-rays) who will provide a report to your paediatrician. Reports are usually ready within 24 hours and will be discussed with you by your paediatrician.

Imaging of the head

When a child has a skeletal survey, imaging of the brain is most often requested too.

Imaging may be by CT scan or MRI scan and the most appropriate method will be decided by your paediatrician on discussion with the Radiology consultant.

More information on CT scans and MRI scans can be found overleaf.