

Having an Imaging Test with Radiation During Pregnancy

X-Ray and CT Exam

Can I have an x-ray or CT exam when I am pregnant?

You can have an x-ray or CT if your doctor thinks you need one as a part of your medical care. Your health is important for your baby's health.

Is it safe to have an x-ray or CT exam while I am pregnant?

In most cases, these exams are safe during pregnancy. X-ray and CT use a small amount of radiation. This type of radiation can be harmful at high levels, but x-ray and CT rarely reach these high levels.

How do I lower the risk to my baby?

The risk to your baby from an x-ray or CT is very small. Even so, tell your doctor you are pregnant when talking about an x-ray or CT scan. This helps your doctor select the best option for you.

What if I had an x-ray or CT exam when I did not know that I was pregnant?

Don't worry if you had an x-ray or CT exam before you found out you were pregnant. In fact, for exams that do not include the pelvis, the radiation dose to the baby is much lower than the amount of radiation the baby will receive naturally from the environment. Every person is exposed to some radiation every day. If your pelvis was included, the dose to your baby is still well below a level that may cause concern.

Who to Call

If you have any questions or concerns about your x-ray or CT exam, talk to your health care provider or radiologist before the test.

Nuclear Medicine Test

Can I have a nuclear medicine test while I am pregnant?

Tell your doctor if you think you might be pregnant. Nuclear medicine tests are often postponed during pregnancy to reduce any risks to the baby. Sometimes, your doctor and the nuclear medicine doctor feel you still need the test because it is the best way to diagnose your problem. Your doctor will think about:

- how many months you are pregnant;
- the risks of not getting the information the test can provide.

Who to Call

If you have any questions or concerns about the nuclear medicine test, please talk to the nuclear medicine tech or your doctor before the test.

What if I am planning to get pregnant and I need a nuclear medicine imaging test?

If you are trying to become pregnant, and you need to have a medical imaging test using radiation, you need to think about the timing of this test in your menstrual cycle. Talk with your healthcare provider about the timing of the test.