

Children Attending the Radiology Department (Northern Services)

Other formats

If you need this information in another format such as audio CD, Braille, large print, high contrast, British Sign Language or translated into another language, please contact the PALS desk on 01271 314090 or at rduh.pals-northern@nhs.net.

General information

Children attend the Radiology Department at the North Devon District Hospital (NDDH) for several reasons; this might be for an appointment for themselves, they may be accompanying an adult or sibling to their appointment or they may be having a pre-visit prior to any imaging appointments.

Children attending the Radiology Department remain the responsibility of the parent or guardian at all times.

In most cases it will be possible for the parent or guardian to accompany their child into the x-ray or scan room.

Radiology Department

The main Radiology Department is located on level 2 of the North Devon District Hospital (NDDH). It also has x-ray rooms and other modalities, such as Computed Tomography (CT) situated in other areas of the hospital, such as the Emergency Department, Outpatients areas A (Children's OPD), C (Fracture Clinic) and D.

Children attending for general x-rays may be imaged in one of several x-ray rooms around the hospital depending on where they have been referred from:

- Patients from their GP, Inpatients and those from the dental clinic will usually be imaged in the main Radiology Department (X-ray & scans A).
- Patients from the Emergency Department (ED) will be x-rayed in one of the two ED x-ray rooms unless dental equipment is required in which case they will be imaged in the main department.
- Patients from Fracture Clinic will be imaged in the Fracture Clinic x-ray room in Outpatients C.
- Patients from Outpatients and Orthopaedic Clinic will be imaged in the Paediatric Outpatients x-ray room in Outpatients A.

Children attending for scans will attend the following departments:

- CT scanner – Outpatients D
- MRI Scanner – Radiology/x-ray & scans A
- Ultrasound – Radiology/x-rays & scans A reception, then directed to ultrasound waiting area.

The Radiology Department is a very busy department, and although every effort is made to see children as quickly as possible, unfortunately delays sometimes occur. Therefore, it is important to ensure that the child brings with them a toy, game or book to keep them occupied while they wait.

A parent or guardian will be able to accompany the child into the x-ray or scan room. However due to limited safe space in the controlled area, other members of the family will not be able to be present in the x-ray room and will have to wait outside. It should be considered carefully who will accompany the child into the x-ray room if the parent attends with multiple children as there is no provision or requirement for staff to look after children in the Radiology Department.

Facilities available

The main Radiology Department has a very small child waiting area as part of the larger general waiting room. In other areas, there is no separate area for children to the main waiting areas.

Our departments are very busy with lots of patients waiting for many different examinations at any one time and so it is not possible to accommodate lots of relatives or other children alongside the child and accompanying adult.

Baby changing facilities are provided and if a quiet area is needed away from the general waiting areas for children, or for baby feeding then this can be accommodated on request.

Radiation

We all receive radiation, known as 'background radiation' every day, although mankind has successfully adapted to it over millions of years. This background radiation is due to natural causes from cosmic rays reaching the earth from space, from certain rocks (which may be contained in building materials), from travel (particularly air flight) and from naturally occurring radon gas (particularly widespread in granite areas of the country such as Cornwall & Dartmoor).

Medical exposures (x-rays) add a small additional dose on top of the normal background radiation dose.

The radiographer is a skilled and very experienced healthcare professional who will always work in the best interests of the child, and is trained to keep exposures of radiation as low as possible, so ensuring that the risk to your child is very low.

What to wear

For some examinations it may be necessary for the child to change out of their normal clothes and into a hospital gown. Changing rooms are available in all departments for this.

Changing is kept to a minimum as much as possible, however if the clothes worn to the appointment include zips, hooks, sequins, studs or thick picture transfers/embroidery etc that will show up on x-rays, cause artefacts or be dangerous if loose (in MRI scanner) then changing cannot be avoided.

You can help by ensuring that your child is dressed in clothes that do not have lots of zips and embellishments on their clothing as above.

Positioning for x-rays

For some examinations it will be necessary for the radiographer to touch the child. This is important to ensure that positioning for the x-ray or scan will be in the correct place and so reduce the need for repeated x-rays.

Ensuring correct position is done by touching/gently prodding the bony landmarks such as the shoulders and spine for chests, the top of the pelvis or joints etc whilst lining up the x-ray equipment. The radiographer will always explain what they are going to do and why before touching the child. They should also seek consent either from the child or the parent/guardian depending on the age of the child.

For the younger child it is helpful if they bring their favourite toy, doll or teddy as this may help with keeping them calm during their x-ray or help with explanations of what will happen during their x-ray.

Carers and comforters

It is sometimes necessary for a carer or comforter to be present during an x-ray examination, either to hold or to reassure the patient. This may be a relative or friend or a member of staff.

All carers and comforters present during the examination will receive a small dose of radiation.

The risks and benefits of being a carer or comforter will be explained by the radiographer prior to being exposed to radiation and a consent form will need to be signed in accordance with radiation regulations.

No person should act as comforter or carer if there is a possibility they may be pregnant or are under the age of 18.

Play specialists

NDDH has a small team of play specialists who will often attend radiology with children or are available for support as required.

Often children who require this extra support have already had contact with the play specialists at the request of the referring clinician and they will already be working with the child and family prior to their appointment.

Occasionally the radiographer will ask the play specialist to attend during an appointment to assist if the child needing to be imaged is struggling with the requirements of the examination, is unable to comply or in need of extra support to be able to complete the examination. However, the play specialists are very busy and this might not always be possible at short notice or without prior arrangement and so on occasion appointments may need to be rearranged.

Possibility of pregnancy

A baby in the womb can be particularly sensitive to the radiation of an x-ray or CT scan.

For some of our x-rays and scans there is a legal requirement to establish if there is a possibility of pregnancy prior to the examination. This information will be recorded on the radiology information system for the examination attended for.

Under the Ionising Radiation (Medical Exposures) Regulations 2017 (IR(ME)R) this includes all those who were female at birth between the ages of 12-55 years of age.

If the x-ray or scan is of the abdomen or pelvis areas, then the radiographer will need to ask children age 12 or above who are female or were female at birth if they have started their periods? And if so, if there is a possibility that they might be pregnant?

In some cases, this may be done without the parent/guardian being present depending on the age of the child and whether the parent/guardian accompanies the child into the x-ray or scan room.

Children accompanying adult patients or siblings

Radiology department staff are unable to look after children whilst an examination or treatment is taking place for another patient who maybe their parent/guardian or sibling, and therefore suitable arrangements must be made for the care of their children or to attend without their child.

The parent will have parental responsibility for their child and it is therefore the parent's responsibility to ensure that any arrangements affecting the child's welfare are suitable.

If the parent decides that their child/children may be left unaccompanied in waiting areas, then they must accept full responsibility and liability for this decision.

If the radiographer decides that the child(ren) cannot be left alone in the waiting area, as the child is unsafe to be left alone, may wander off, is likely to be at risk, be disruptive or suffer any harm, then the examination should be postponed until the parent is able to make suitable arrangements to attend without the child.

Radiology staff have no automatic duty to supervise children whilst a patient attends for an examination/treatment, however they do have a personal and professional duty to safeguard any child and ensure that they do not suffer any harm.

Further information

For all booking enquiries, please contact the radiology appointments team on 01271 349183.

Further help and information is available from the Liaison Radiographer (01271 311678) who will be happy to discuss requirements for your child's appointment or put you in contact with the correct person to deal with your query.

Other useful patient information leaflets available on the Trust website:

- [MRI scan for children](#)
- [Having a CT Scan](#)
- [Ultrasound](#)
- [Hip ultrasound for babies](#)

PALS

The Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) ensures that the NHS listens to patients, relatives, carers and friends, answers questions and resolves concerns as quickly as possible. If you have a query or concern call 01271 314090 or email rduh.pals-northern@nhs.net. You can also visit the PALS and Information Centre in person at North Devon District Hospital, Barnstaple.

Have your say

Royal Devon University Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust aims to provide high quality services. However, please tell us when something could be improved. If you have a comment or compliment about a service or treatment, please raise your comments with a member of staff or the PALS team in the first instance.

Tell us about your experience of our services. Share your feedback on the Care Opinion website www.careopinion.org.uk.

Royal Devon University Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust
Raleigh Park, Barnstaple
Devon EX31 4JB
Tel. 01271 322577
www.royaldevon.nhs.uk

© Royal Devon University Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust
This leaflet was designed by the Communications Department.
Email: ndht.contactus@nhs.net