

Chest x-ray information

An x-ray is a quick and painless procedure commonly used to produce images of the inside of the body

Taking an x-ray is an effective method to help detect a range of conditions. X-rays are usually carried out by trained specialists called radiographers. Hobson Health offers x-rays at your place of work, and via ad hoc appointments at a local specialist facility.

Why do I need an x-ray?

The HSE have recently released updated guidance on health surveillance for workers exposed to silica dust that can be breathed in. This is known as respirable crystalline silica or RCS.

RCS can potentially lead to a number of health problems including silicosis and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD).

New HSE guidance requires employers to make their own assessment if employees might be exposed to RCS and if necessary to carry out health surveillance including chest x-rays. The chest x-ray can detect the first stages of silicosis before it affects breathing or causes symptoms so it is a necessary test.

If you have been referred for an x-ray your employer will have identified you as falling within the group of people requiring further health surveillance.

How often will I need an x-ray?

The first x-ray will usually be taken after 15 years of working in an area with RCS exposure. X-rays are then required every 3 years if you continue to be exposed.

Preparing for an x-ray

You don't need to do anything special to prepare for your x-ray. You can eat and drink as normal beforehand and can continue taking your usual medications.

It's a good idea to wear loose comfortable clothes, as you may be able to wear these during the x-ray.

Try to avoid wearing jewellery and clothes containing metal (such as zips), as these will need to be removed.

If you wear reading glasses bring these along if you need them to complete paperwork.

Having an x-ray

Typically one image of the chest is taken which will be taken from the rear of the body.

The radiographer will tell you how to stand.

Male employees may be asked to remove their shirt for the x-ray. This may not be necessary if a thin t-shirt is worn.

Female employees will be asked to remove their bra but may wear a thin t-shirt (no buttons/metal) for the x-ray.

The radiographer may be male or female. A chaperone is available if we are notified in advance.

The x-ray will last for a fraction of a second. You won't feel anything while it's carried out and it is a painless procedure - meaning you can get straight back to your normal activities.

The whole process will last approximately 10 minutes. The radiologist will check that you have completed the consent form in full before taking the x-ray.

Are x-rays safe?

People are often concerned about being exposed to radiation during an x-ray. However, the part of your body being examined will only be exposed to a low level of radiation for a fraction of a second.

For example, an x-ray of your chest, limbs or teeth is equivalent to a few days' worth of background radiation or a short flight. For more information, see GOV.UK: patient dose information.

All chest x-rays will be digital. Digital x-rays require up to 90% less radiation than film images.

Digital images are much higher resolution than film x-rays which means they can be read to a higher degree of accuracy.

The benefits and risks of having an x-ray for the purposes of screening for silicosis have been evaluated and by far outweigh the risks on minimal radiation exposure.

Talk to your radiographer about the potential risks beforehand, or contact Hobson Health on 01782 574200, if you have any concerns.

What happens after an x-ray?

Within three weeks of the x-ray you will receive an outcome letter by post or email. This will provide an overview of your x-ray results and any recommendations about further x-rays.

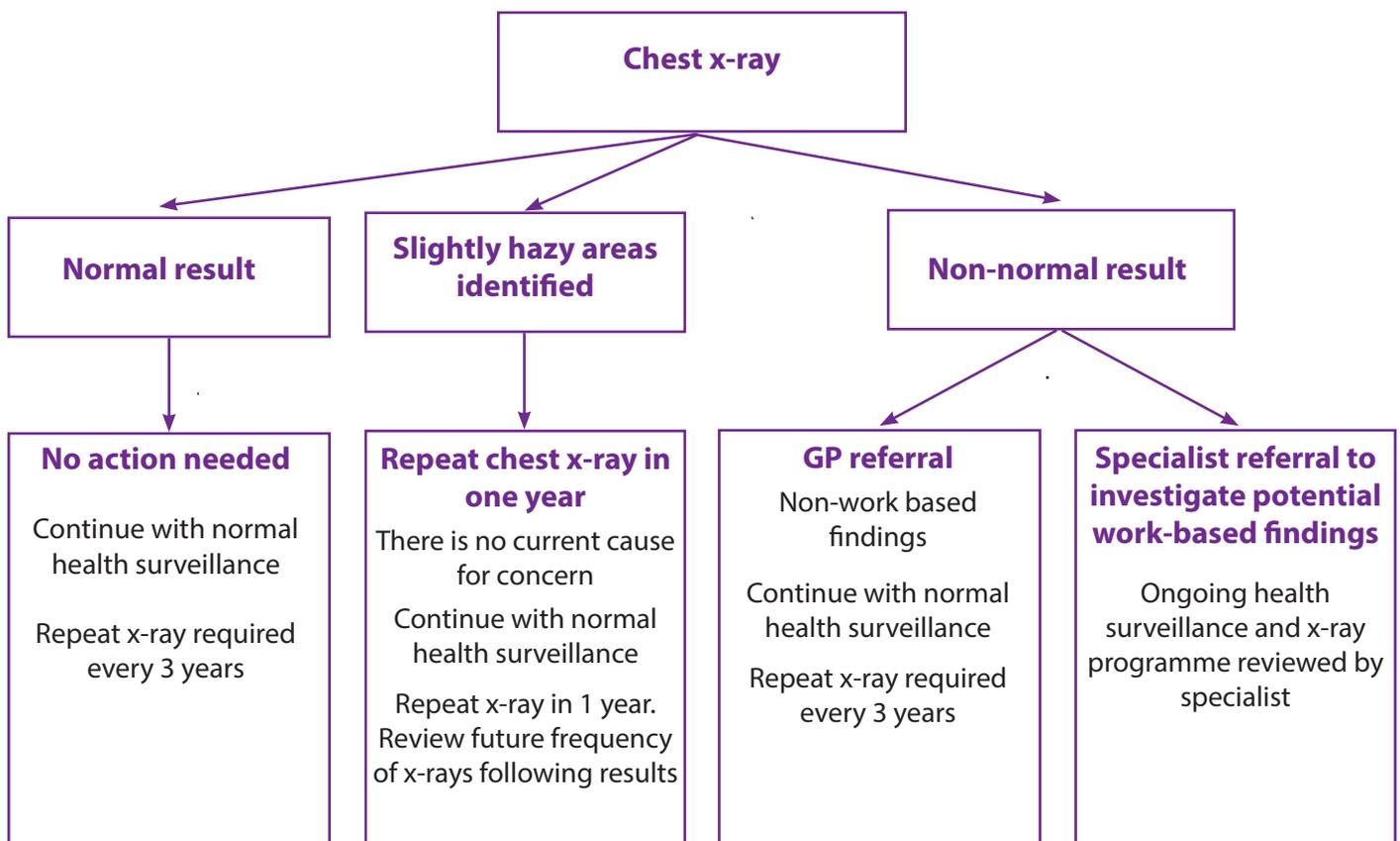
If the results of your x-ray are not entirely normal and you require onward referral you may be contacted by Hobson Health by telephone to discuss this. We may also need to contact you to clarify information or if you omitted any something from your consent form.

If your x-ray shows a slightly hazy area there is no need for immediate concern. We will contact you to let you know that you will need a repeat x-ray in 12 months' time.

We will send a summary of your x-ray outcome to your employer.

Outcome actions

The diagram below summarises the different actions that could be taken based on your x-ray results.



For further information, or if you have any questions about chest x-rays, please call us on 01782 574200

www.hobsonhealth.co.uk
01782 574200