

Division of Imaging

## Information for Patients/Carers

# Skeletal Survey

This leaflet is designed to provide you with more information regarding your child's skeletal survey examination. This should not replace a conversation between you and the doctor looking after your child. If you have any more questions, please refer back to your doctor or the radiology department (details at the end of this leaflet).

## What is a skeletal survey?

A skeletal survey is a series of X-rays (usually between 20 – 30 pictures), used to assess all the bones in your child's skeleton from two different angles.

It is common for the radiologist to require a follow-up limited skeletal survey to make sure all information was obtained. This usually happens 10 -14 days after the first skeletal survey. It is very similar to the first skeletal survey however often requires less images so tends to take less time. The clinical team caring for your child will let you know if this is needed.

## Why does my child need a skeletal survey?

Doctors have many reasons that they request a skeletal survey examination, and this may be done along with other tests. The X-rays taken are used to assess all the bones in your child's skeleton.

## What happens during a Skeletal Survey?

Two radiographers will carry out the X-rays and a nurse or another health care professional such as a health care assistant may also be present for the duration of the examination. The Radiographers will position your child for each X-ray.

Your child may need to be supported in position by yourself (provided you are not pregnant and are able to wear a lead rubber apron). If you are assisting in supporting your child in these positions the radiographer will explain exactly what you need to do.

The examination is long and requires your child to be very still in certain positions for short periods of time on an X-ray board. This often means your child may become

upset and distressed; however, this is completely normal as it is a very unusual experience for them. The radiographers are experienced at carrying out these examinations and will do their best to minimise distress where possible. We appreciate this can still be upsetting for you to watch, so please let the radiographer know if you would like to leave the room at any point during the examination.

Your child will not feel the X-ray being taken however they will need to be moved into various positions to assess all the bones. Your child may find it uncomfortable whilst being held still but the radiographers will try to carry out the examination as quickly as possible to minimise any distress. The radiographers may use various X-ray sponges to help position your child, this is completely normal and helps to keep your child as still and as comfortable as possible.

If your child becomes too distressed the examination may be stopped and there will be a discussion with your child's doctor about the possibility of your child receiving sedation to make them sleep before we attempt the examination again. If this is the case everything will be explained to you before proceeding.

## Will my child feel any pain?

You cannot feel x-rays so the procedure itself is painless.

However, it is important to get the correct positions. Holding this position / lying on a table may, for some people, feel uncomfortable, but for the majority of patients this is not the case.

## Are there any risks with this examination?

### Radiation risk

X-rays use ionising radiation, which in large doses can be harmful. However, the radiographers carrying out the examination will be using their expertise to keep the radiation your child receives as low as reasonably practical.

This means they will use the minimum radiation possible, to allow the doctors to effectively assess your child's bones. One of the radiographers will keep track of this throughout the examination.

## Is there anything I need to inform you of before I attend for my appointment?

If there is a possibility that you are pregnant, please make a member of the medical team aware, as you will be unable to hold your child during the X-ray examination, they can advise you of your options.

## How to prepare for the Skeletal Survey exam?

If you are upset and distressed your child will feel this too so, if possible, try and be calm and relaxed. The best way to help your child feel calm and at ease is to make sure you understand what is going to happen and what to expect – please ask the medical team any questions you may have.

Before the examination it is important that your child is fully undressed other than a nappy, this is because the clothing will show up on your child's X-rays. We recommend you bring a blanket to keep your child warm and comfortable throughout the examination. However, you may be asked to move it for certain X-rays as it shows up in the same way clothing does. You are welcome to bring dummies, bottles or toys that help sooth your child and if there is any music/ white noise that they find comforting please inform the radiographers and they will do their best to accommodate this.

If possible, attend the department with two adults that are willing to help with holding.

Your child's nappy will be removed for some of the X-rays so it's always useful to bring spares and wipes, you can also bring clothes to dress your child in once the examination is completed but the radiographer will tell you when it is suitable to do this.

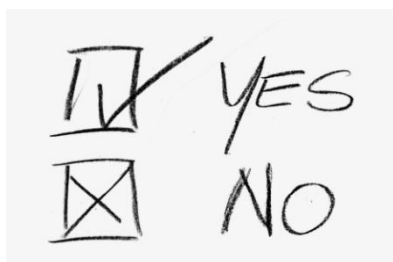
### Other Children

No children other than the child being X-rayed will be allowed in the X-ray room, so where possible do not bring them to the Radiology Department. Where this is unavoidable an adult will have to sit with them in the waiting room so please bring a friend or relative to do this. The Radiology Department will not be able to look after your other child(ren), and they cannot be left unaccompanied in the waiting area.

### Help and support in the department

If you or your child have any medical problem which you feel may affect your safety in the department, or if you feel you may need any assistance, please let us know when you arrive.

## Do I need to give my permission (consent)?



In order to carry out this examination it is important that your child's doctor gains informed consent from you. This means that you are happy for your child to go ahead with the examination, and you understand what is going to happen - please feel free to ask questions and if required ask for an interpreter in advance.

As part of the informed consent, you should also be aware of the risks of this examination (mentioned in the previous section of this leaflet).

You may be asked to assist in holding your child still for the examination, you can decline to do this, and a nurse or other health care professional will then assist the radiographers. Anyone in the X-ray room other than your child will have to wear lead rubber coats (some staff may stand behind a special lead-lined screen) to protect them from ionising radiation produced by the X-rays.

## How long will it take?

The examination normally takes around 45 minutes to 1 hour, but these times may vary.

## What happens after the skeletal survey examinations?

One of the radiographers will ask a consultant radiologist (specialist doctor trained to look at X-rays) to check all of the X-rays. The radiologist may ask for some more X-rays to be performed, as they may want to see some bones from different angles, this is very normal and nothing to be concerned about. Once the radiologist is happy the examination is complete, you will be able to redress your child. You will be informed you can return to the ward or home depending on where you have come from. The radiologist will then study all of the X-rays in detail and write a formal report and this is sent to the doctor looking after your child. The team looking after you should let you know how you will get the results.

Your child can eat, drink and play as normal once the examination is complete. You may receive information regarding a follow up examination or appointment. The doctor looking after your child will give you this information.



## Follow-up skeletal survey

It is common for the radiologist to require a follow-up limited skeletal survey to make sure all information was obtained. This usually happens 10 -14 days after the first skeletal survey. It is very similar to the first skeletal survey however often requires less images so tends to take less time. The clinical team caring for your child will let you know if this is needed.

## What should I do if my child has a problem?

There should not be any problems as a result of the skeletal survey examinations.

If you feel your child's condition has changed, or you need further medical advice before receiving your results/after leaving the hospital, please make an appointment with the doctor that referred you, or in an emergency, go to your nearest Emergency Department (ED).

## How can I provide feedback for the appointment I have attended today?

The Division of Imaging welcomes feedback from all our patients. We actively take part in the Friends and Family Test, and we complete a patient experience questionnaire every month to obtain feedback on the experiences you have had. Please speak to a member of staff regarding the feedback or there are posters within the department with QR codes so you can complete these online.

## Contact us

For contact information please refer to your appointment letter or if you are an inpatient, please direct your queries to one of the medical staff on the ward

### Language and accessible support services:

If you need an interpreter or information about your care in a different language or format, please get in touch.

### Your comments and concerns

If you would like to provide feedback you can:

- Ask to speak to the department lead / manager.
- Write to us: Patient Advice and Liaison Services, 1<sup>st</sup> Floor, Cobbett House, Manchester Royal Infirmary, Oxford Road, Manchester, M13 9WL.
- Log onto the Patient Opinion website [www.patientopinion.org.uk/](http://www.patientopinion.org.uk/) click on 'Tell your Story'

### If you would like to discuss a concern or make a complaint:

Ask to speak to the department manager – they may be able to help straight away. Inpatients can speak to a senior nurse or manager by contacting the Tell Us Today service on (0161) 701 1999.

Contact our Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) on (0161) 276 8686 email: [pals@mft.nhs.uk](mailto:pals@mft.nhs.uk). Ask for our information leaflet.

We welcome your feedback so we can continue to improve our services.

### NHS 111

This service offers medical help and advice from fully trained advisers supported by experienced nurses and paramedics. Available over the phone 24 hours a day.

Telephone: 111, 24 hours a day  
Website: [www.111.nhs.uk](http://www.111.nhs.uk)

## Finally

Some of your questions should have been answered by this leaflet but remember that this is only a starting point for discussion about your treatment with the doctors looking after you. Further information can be obtained by contacting the radiology department that is performing the procedure.