

What you need to know about...

Lower Extremity Radiography

Lower extremity radiography is another way of saying x-ray images of the toes, feet, ankles, lower leg, knee, upper leg or hip. These types of examinations are performed to detect conditions such as fractures, soft tissue damage and arthritis. A physician will request this procedure when you have an injury to a lower extremity or you experience unexplained pain in the area.

Patient Preparation

Before your examination, a radiographer will explain the procedure to you and answer any questions you might have. A radiographer, also known as a radiologic technologist, is a skilled medical professional who has received specialized education in the areas of radiation protection, patient care, radiation exposure, radiographic positioning and radiographic procedures. As part of his or her duties, the radiographer will determine the amount of radiation necessary to produce a diagnostically useful image.

Depending on the body part being examined, the radiographer may ask you to put on a hospital gown. This gown has no metal snaps on it, because metal can interfere with the accuracy of the image.

If you are a woman of child-bearing age, the radiographer will ask if there is any possibility you are pregnant. It is important that you tell the radiographer the date of your last menstrual period and whether there is a chance that you may be pregnant.

During the Examination

Depending upon the body part being examined, you may be given a lead-equivalent rubberized apron to place on your lap. This apron will protect your reproductive organs from unnecessary radiation.

The radiographer will position you on the x-ray table and may use sponges or other equipment to help keep your leg or foot still during the examination. It is important not to move during the exposure, because movement will blur the image. You may be asked to turn in various positions so that additional images can be taken from different angles.

If it is difficult for you to turn or if you do not feel well, tell the radiographer. His or her job is to give you the best care possible.

Once the examination is complete, the radiographer will process your images, determine whether they are technically acceptable and assess whether additional images are required. The images then will be given to a radiologist, a physician who specializes in the diagnostic interpretation of medical images.

Postexamination Information

After your radiographs have been reviewed by a radiologist, your personal physician will receive a report of the findings. Your physician then will advise you of the results and discuss what further procedures, if any, are needed.

The radiation that you are exposed to during this examination, like the



radiation produced during any other x-ray procedure, passes through you immediately. ♦

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