

Fluoroscopy

Fluoroscopy is a study of moving body structures. You can think of it as an X-ray “movie.” A continuous X-ray beam passes through the body part being examined. The beam is transmitted to a TV-like monitor so that the body part and its motion can be seen in detail. Radiologists and radiology practitioner assistants use fluoroscopy for diagnoses and therapy.

We perform fluoroscopy exams for a variety of reasons. Most often, we order them for patients who have:

- Abdominal pain
- Gastroesophageal reflux
- Headaches
- Joint pain
- Neurogenic bladder
- Urinary tract infections

For patients who have such conditions, procedures using fluoroscopy include:

- Contrast-enhanced enemas
- Cystograms
- Gastrostomy tube (G-tube) replacements
- Joint injection and arthrogram lumbar punctures
- Myelograms
- Nasogastric/nasojejunal feeding tube (NG/NJ) placements
- Small bowel series
- Upper gastrointestinal series
- Voiding cystourethrograms (VCUG)

Before the Exam

Preparing at Home

Parents can help children prepare for their fluoroscopy exam by helping them practice lying still for 15 minutes at a time.

Screening for Possible Pregnancy

Patients who are pregnant or who believe they could be pregnant should talk to their doctors before having a fluoroscopy examination. Information discussed with a doctor is confidential. In addition, parents or caregivers who are pregnant or believe they might be pregnant shouldn't be in the room during a Fluoroscopy exam.

Female patients who are 12 and older must have a urine or blood pregnancy test before receiving sedation medicine and/or IV contrast dye, or if they are receiving radiation directed at their abdominal cavity (including their lower spine, hip, and pelvis).

Using Positive Distraction and Sedation Medicine

We help our patients relax by creating a soothing environment. We offer positive-distraction technology in our CT and fluoroscopy rooms. Positive-distraction technology uses lighting, music and videos to help patients relax during procedures and tests.

Some patients are unable to remain still for long periods of time. Others experience pain or anxiety during imaging scans. Some patients require sedation for imaging tests. Talk to your health care provider if you think this will be necessary.

Giving Contrast Dyes

For most fluoroscopy exams, we give patients contrast dye through the mouth, the urethra, the rectum, a stoma, the spine, or a joint, or into a vein through an existing IV line. Some of these exams require that the patient doesn't eat or drink anything during the four hours leading up to the exam. That includes any solids or liquids by mouth and/or feeding tube. Patients who have ever had a reaction to contrast dye should tell their doctors. Patients who need contrast dye will receive a patient education handout about that.

During the Exam

Minimizing Radiation Exposure

We perform fluoroscopy exams thoroughly, while exposing patients to the smallest amount of radiation possible. Whenever possible, we'll use a protective apron to cover parts of the body that don't need examining.

The Scan

Once a patient is in position, we sometimes move the table and the patient into various positions. The machine will make some beeping and clicking noises during the exam. We ask the patient to stay very still during the scan to make sure that we get clear pictures. At certain times, we might roll the patient from side to side.

Fluoroscopy examinations usually take about 15-60 minutes to complete, depending on the body part that needs testing.

Parent/Caregiver Role

The most important thing parents and caregivers can do is to help children stay calm during imaging scans. They can do this by staying calm themselves. Parents and caregivers also can prepare the patient for the scan by following the tips in this handout's Preparing at Home section.

In some cases, parents or caregivers can be with their children during a scan. We'll provide anyone in the exam room with a protective apron to wear as a precaution. When a parent or caregiver can't be in the room, a two-way speaker allows communication back and forth from our control room. It's important, however, to avoid interfering with the instructions of the X-ray technologist.

When possible, parents can reassure children by talking to them, holding their hands, and distracting them with familiar stories or thinking games (spelling, addition, etc.).

After the Exam

Sedation Recovery

Patients who receive sedation medicine will go to the recovery area so that we can watch them until the medicine wears off.

Receiving the Results

We'll send the scan results to the doctor who ordered the exam—usually within 48 hours. If the results are urgent, we'll contact the doctor immediately. To receive the results, contact the doctor who ordered the scan.

More Information

For more information about imaging tests at Gillette, please call the Advanced Imaging Center at 651-229-3995.

[Make An Appointment](#) [651-290-8707](tel:651-290-8707)

This information is for educational purposes only. It is not intended to replace the advice of your health care providers. If you have any questions, talk with your doctor or others on your health care team.

If you are a Gillette patient with urgent questions or concerns, please contact Telehealth Nursing at [651-229-3890](tel:651-229-3890).