

**SAHTU HEALTH & SOCIAL SERVICES AUTHORITY**  
**Policy**

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COMMUNITY HEALTH  
CENTER POLICY

**X-Rays in Community  
Health Centers**

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**Policy:**

Chest and extremity x-rays are taken and processed in Community Health Centers by Community Health Nurses and/or specially trained community staff who have been orientated to the procedure. These x-rays may be taken with or without a physician's order. The x-ray machines are designed for and used only for the taking of x-rays of chest and extremities. Other body parts (e.g., hip, skull, neck) should not be x-rayed. For chest views AP or PA views only are taken.

Infants and children 10 years of age and less should not have x-rays of the chest done with the equipment available at the Health Centres. X-rays of potential fractures may be done on these children if they are cooperative during the procedure.

Children 12 years and under who need CXR for TB surveillance should be sent to IRH or STH as a lateral view is also needed, which cannot be performed adequately in the Health Centre. AP views alone are acceptable for adults in this circumstance.

Female patients of child bearing age must be asked for the date of their last menstrual period (LMP) to ascertain that she is not pregnant and this information documented on the X-ray requisition. If the patient is pregnant, she should be sent to IRH or STH to have the procedure completed.

All patients under 60 years of age are to wear a lead apron during their x-ray procedure.

**Purpose:**

- To produce x-ray films that assist Community Health Nurses and physicians with diagnosing and treating specific medical conditions
- To reduce unnecessary exposure to radiation for children and adults
- To control the quality of diagnostic images being produced
- To demonstrate compliance with *Health Canada Radiation Protection Bureau Standards*.

**Procedure:**

Basic steps in taking an X-ray: WEAR YOUR DOSIMETER

- 1) Set up x-ray machine, pointing at the wall for chests or at the ground for extremities.
  - a) X-rays of extremities are taken at a distance of 40 inches from the x-ray tube to the cassette/film
  - b) Chest x-rays are taken at a distance of 72 inches
- 2) Identify Left and Right designation by the placing the appropriate lead markers on the cassette. This is required by law. Be sure to remove them before putting the cassette into the CR processor
- 3) Set techniques – Kilo volts Peak (kVp), MAS and Time
- 4) Ensure you are wearing your dosimeter at waste level
- 5) Bring your patient into the x-ray room and remove all jewelry around or over the area to be exposed.
- 6) Assess the patient's LMP
- 7) If the patient is under the age of sixty (60) place a lead apron on the patient so that it is between him/her and x-ray machine
- 8) Position the patient according to the positioning instructions for the particular area to be x-rayed.
- 9) Provider to take precautions for self-protection by wearing an apron to standing behind a protective device. Take the exposures required.
- 10) Complete Community Film Requisition and fax to Diagnostic Imaging at STH
- 11) Follow the operating instructions for the Dipacs system and CR processor

**Additional information:**

- a) Always attempt to “cone down” on chest or limb you are x-raying so that only the area you need is exposed to radiation.
- b) Do not do comparison views on children with 2 exceptions:
  - Elbow injury, 12 yrs and under, lateral view of unaffected side.
  - Knee injury, 12 yrs and under, especially boys, lateral view of unaffected side.
- c) All community x-ray requisitions must be filled out correctly, including the patient's name, date of birth, health care number, date of x-ray, history of clinical findings, exam requested, community of origin, x-ray number.
- d) Maintain a log book with the patient's information including the KVP/MAS as well as the Exposure Index Range recorded

References:

1. Health Canada Radiation Protection Bureau Standards  
<http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/ewh-semt/pubs/radiation/index-eng.php>
2. Accreditation Canada Qmentum Program 2009 Standards, Community Health Services, Standards 5.1, 10.2, 11.1, 11.2, 11.3
3. Qmentum Required Organized Practice, Worklife/Workforce

Approved by:



Chad Fehr, CEO