

We may decide to order imaging studies to diagnose your condition or to help confirm our diagnosis. Xrays, Computerized Tomography (CT Scans), and Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) studies are the most commonly ordered imaging. Each of these have specific uses, advantages, and disadvantages.

Xray: A Two-dimensional view of bony tissues.

- Advantages: Inexpensive, doesn't require prior authorization from insurance, results are ready very quickly
- Disadvantages: Doesn't show fine details, doesn't show soft tissues, tiny dose of radiation

CT Scans: A Three-dimensional view of bony tissues

- Advantages: Sensitive to acute bleeds, excellent resolution for bony problems, scan only takes 5-15 minutes to complete, can be performed on patients with metallic implants.
- Disadvantages: Larger dose of radiation than x ray (still pretty small), not as sensitive to view soft tissues as MRI, usually requires prior authorization from insurance, more expensive

MRI Scans: A Three-dimensional view of bony and soft tissues

- Advantages: Excellent sensitivity to soft-tissues, does not produce radiation
- Disadvantages: Very expensive, almost always requires prior-authorization from insurance, emits magnetic resonance that can interfere with metallic implants, not as sensitive as CT-Scan for bony lesions, scan takes a long time (30-60 minutes), results take about a week to get