



Computer Based X-ray at Fair Lakes Urgent Care Center

As we celebrate our 12 years of operation this month, Fair Lakes Urgent Care Center (FLUCC) has remained the leader in innovation aimed at providing “Quality, Convenient Medical Care” to its clients. In 1996, we were among the first Urgent Care Centers in the nation to embrace the web as a tool to enhance services to our clients. Back then, it did not matter which search engine you used, or where you were searching from, we always popped up first.

We are at it again in raising the bar and setting the standards for x-ray services for urgent care centers. Since August 2007, FLUCC has adopted **Computer Radiography (CR)**. In layman terms, this is also known as computerized x-ray. The Computer Radiography replaces traditional x-ray film with digital imaging grids. With the new system, images are captured and immediately downloaded to a computer system for review. Instead of waiting for the film to be developed and processed in the darkroom, the x-ray technician and the FLUCC physician can review the images instantly on a computer screen, much in the same way that pictures can be reviewed on the LCD screen of a digital camera. One might ask what is the big deal? Well, there are many advantages to this new system. To mention a few:

- With digital technology, there are fewer retakes. In the conventional (analog) system, when the images come out too dark or too light, the technician often has to retake the x-ray, which means additional radiation to the patient. However, with the computerized x-ray – that is not necessary because the images can be manipulated (i.e. zoomed, darkened, and lightened) to enable accurate interpretation of the images.
- The system is completely filmless with the positive environmental benefits. No more chemicals, silver materials and plastic paper. Storage room for filing has also been eliminated because all the images are stored digitally. Translation, it is now easier to retrieve old films for comparison.
- Images and patient information can even be sent to other healthcare providers in different locations via a secure network. Another advantage is the ease with which images can be archived and retrieved. For years, x-rays images have been stored in large file folders in rooms filled with shelving units. Retrieving an x-ray for comparison or review meant that someone had to physically go to the storage room, find the patient’s folder, and pick through it by hand to find the desired image and then arrange on how to physically transport or mail the x-ray images to the desired destination. The process could take days, which sometimes meant critical time loss for care, and in some cases patient is exposed to additional radiation because the treating physicians may not have the patience to wait or the information is needed so quickly that the x-rays have to be retaken.
- For patients who are keen on keeping their own records – the digital images can be emailed to them or CD copies can be made, which means they are in possession of the images at all times. Imagine being at a hospital on another continent and using an email to ask us to send over your prior chest x-ray images, then within a minute, the x-ray image is emailed to you from our center. This is the present, not the future.

As we journey into our “teen years”, we are once again going back to our roots and recommitting to our values, “Quality, Convenient Medical Care.” Although Fair Lakes Urgent Care Center has grown, its goals and values remain the same - helping people from this region access cutting edge medical technology and convenient medical care.”