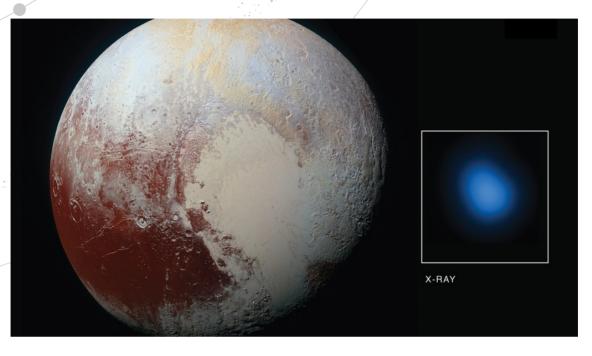
PŘEČTĚTE SI SÓLOKAPRY Z VESMÍRU ZPRÁVY Z CELÉHO VESMÍRU

SPACE



Seeing Pluto with X-ray Vision

X-rays are a more powerful version of the normal type of light your eyes can see. Xrays can travel through things that ordinary light can't, like wood and plastic, because they have more energy.

This ability can be very useful indeed. For example, X-rays can travel through people's skin and muscles, so doctors can see their bones underneath.

X-rays are also used to study cosmic objects. In hospitals, X-ray pictures show us a silhouette of our bones, but in astronomy, we photograph the object creating the X-rays itself.

The pictures above show Pluto, a dwarf planet at the outer edges of our Solar System. The image on the left shows Pluto in normal light, and the blue blob on the right is the X-ray light from Pluto.

The fact we can see X-rays from Pluto is surprising. Cold, rocky worlds like Pluto have no way of creating these powerful X-rays. Scientists believe that the Sun is responsible.

The Sun doesn't just give off heat and light, there's also a stream of particles flowing from the Sun. Where these particles meet a planet's atmosphere, X-rays are created.

But Pluto lies about 6,000 million kilometers from the Sun. At this distance there just aren't enough particles reaching the dwarf planet to explain why its X-ray light is so bright.



We need deeper and more detailed images of the X-rays coming from Pluto to solve this mystery for sure. But one possible explanation is that a long tail of gas, like those seen on comets, could be trailing behind Pluto.

• COOL FACT!

Pluto lies around 6,000 million kilometres from Earth. It takes light about 5 hours to travel this distance — including that X-ray light that created this picture!



