



**Chandra X-ray  
Observatory Center**

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**NGC 281:** A nebula with active star formation about 9,200 light years from Earth.  
(Credit: X-ray: NASA/CXC/CfA/S.Wolk; IR: NASA/JPL/CfA/S.Wolk)

**Caption:** This composite image of NGC 281 contains X-ray data from Chandra (purple) with infrared observations from Spitzer (red, green, blue). The high-mass stars in NGC 281 drive many aspects of their galactic environment through powerful winds flowing from their surfaces and intense radiation that heats surrounding gas, "boiling it away" into interstellar space. This process results in the formation of large columns of gas and dust, as seen on the left side of the image. These structures likely contain newly forming stars. The eventual deaths of massive stars as supernovas will also seed the galaxy with material and energy.

**Scale:** Image is about 18 arcmin across (about 48 light years across)

*Chandra X-ray Observatory ACIS Image*

*CXC operated for NASA by the Smithsonian Astrophysical Observatory*

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