Supported By:

American Association of Physicists in Medicine (AAPM)
https://www.aapm.org

American Board of Radiology (ABR)
https://www.theabr.org

American College of Radiology (ACR)
https://www.acr.org

American Society of Radiologic Technologists (ASRT)
https://www.asrt.org

Image Gently
https://www.imagegently.org

Society for Pediatric Radiology (SPR)
https://www.pedrad.org

Additional Resources

The American Association of Physicists in Medicine: Communicating Advances in Radiation Education for Shielding (CARES)
https://www.aapm.org/CARES

British Institute of Radiology
https://www.bir.org.uk

If you have any questions or concerns about your imaging exam, do not hesitate to contact us.

Diagnostic Imaging
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{Safe Imaging} *we do that here.*

Northwestern Medical Center

Diagnostic Imaging:
Why shielding is no longer recommended

Northwestern Medical Center
www.NorthwesternMedicalCenter.org

Where's the Lead Apron?

You may notice that NMC no longer shields patients' organs during imaging exams. Based on over 70 years of research, medical experts now know that the one of the best ways to keep patients safe during imaging exams is not to use shields.

This brochure gives you information about why shielding is no longer recommended.

Background

In the 1950s, medical experts had less knowledge about how the X-ray radiation used in medical imaging affected our bodies.

One concern was that the radiation might damage cells that could be passed along to future generations. Because of this concern, lead shields were often placed over patients' bodies during imaging exams.

We now know shields are not necessary for safe imaging.

The amount of radiation used in healthcare imaging has decreased over 95 percent since the 1950s. Better technology means that today's medical imaging equipment can make high-quality images using only very small amounts of radiation.

Scientists found that our organs are much less sensitive to radiation than previously thoughts. This is true for patients of all ages.

Shields can cover up parts of the body that your doctor needs to see. If this happens, then the exam may need to be repeated.

Shields can interfere with other dose-saving features. X-ray equipment includes technology that makes sure just the right amount of radiation is used for the exam. Sometimes a shield can interfere with this technology, which can actually increase the amount of radiation from the exam.