Changes to shielding requirements

PATIENT INFORMATION SHEET

In line with recommendations from key industry bodies, there have been changes to the way we shield reproductive organs.

Background

Shielding in medical imaging was introduced over 70 years ago to minimise the risks of radiation doses on the reproductive regions.

Due to significant advancements in technology, the amount of radiation emitted in medical imaging has decreased by 95% since the 1950s.

The Australasian College of Physical Scientists and Engineers now advocates for the minimisation of shielding in medical imaging.

Reasons behind the reduction in shielding

As the medical community continues to deepen its understanding of how radiation affects the body, together with advancements in equipment, it has been recognised that the risk for the majority of imaging examinations is either too small to be determined or may even be zero.

Regardless of age or gender, It has also been found that reproductive organs are much less sensitive to radiation than previously thought. The dose required to cause infertility is more than 100 times the amount used in medical imaging.

In some cases, shields can also cover up areas of the body which interferes with a radiologist's ability to form an accurate diagnosis

For these reasons, the recommendations made by key industry bodies are suggesting that shielding is no longer necessary in most cases.

Our Policy

Benson Radiology follows current best practice recommendations in limiting the use of fetal and gonadal shielding during our medical imaging.

Most of our X-ray, fluoroscopy and CT machines can automatically determine how much radiation to use based on the part of the body being imaged. If a shield is obstructing this calculation, it could mean an increase in radiation dose.

If you have any concerns or wish to use shielding, please speak with our staff.

Further reading

AAPM Position Statement on the Use of Patient Gonadal and Fetal Shielding. (2019). Retrieved from https://www.aapm.org/org/policies/details.asp?id=468&type=PP&t=true

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