

The Discontinuation of Patient Shielding in Diagnostic Imaging

Effective March 10th, 2021



At Stanford Imaging Services, we understand that radiation exposure is a concern to our patients and their referring physicians. Stanford Imaging Services is committed to the radiation safety principles of ALARA (**As Low As Reasonably Achievable**). Technologists are trained in the latest dose reduction techniques to provide the highest level of diagnostic quality images one patient at a time.

Stanford Imaging Services is following the recommendations by **National Council on Radiation Protection and Measurements (NCRP)** and the **AAPM** to discontinue patient shielding in diagnostic imaging.

Gonadal shielding (GS) was introduced and widely recommended in the 1950s with the intent of minimizing the potential for heritable genetic effects from medical exposures. Scientific evidence has led the NCRP to reconsider the recommendation for GS. Several factors contribute to NCRP's new recommendation.

- **The amount of radiation used in medical imaging has decreased over 95% since the 1950s.**
- **Scientists found that the gonads are much less sensitive to radiation than previously thought.**
- **Shields can cover up parts of the body that your doctor needs to see.**
- **Shields can interfere with other dose-saving features.**

American Association of Physicists in Medicine (AAPM) Position Statement

Patient gonadal and fetal shielding during X-ray based diagnostic imaging should be discontinued as routine practice. Patient shielding may jeopardize the benefits of undergoing radiological imaging. Use of these shields during X-ray based diagnostic imaging may obscure anatomic information or interfere with the automatic exposure control of the imaging system. These effects can compromise the diagnostic efficacy of the exam, or actually result in an increase in the patient's radiation dose. Because of these risks and the minimal to nonexistent benefit associated with fetal and gonadal shielding, AAPM recommends that the use of such shielding should be discontinued.



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Resources:

[Stanfordhealthcare.org/imaging](https://stanfordhealthcare.org/imaging)

National Council on Radiation Protection and Measurements: [ncrponline.org](https://www.ncrponline.org)

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

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

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

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

Image Gently: [imagegently.org](https://www.imagegently.org)

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

