



Why was I not given a lead apron?

We have stopped the routine use of lead shielding for patients for radiation-based imaging exams (x-ray, CT scans). This change is based on the best scientific evidence available and supported by multiple national medical organizations, including the American Association of Physicists in Medicine (AAPM) and the American College of Radiology (ACR). Many healthcare organizations across the globe have already shifted their practice based on this guidance.

Lead shields were introduced in the 1950s to protect the testes or ovaries, or a fetus (baby). However, more than 50 years of research has shown that shielding provides little to no benefit and could actually increase the amount of radiation used for the exam. Also, modern advancements in imaging technology capture better images while using much less radiation.

We are committed to continually evaluating our practices and updating our technology in order to provide you with safe care. Should you have additional questions or concerns, we encourage you to discuss this with your provider or radiologist.

Our Radiation Safety Officer can be reached at (603) 663-3115.



SOLUTIONHEALTH
The Elliot

Frequently Asked Questions

- 1. Why do you not shield patients anymore?** Studies have shown that shielding patients provides very little to no benefit. Most of the dose from an x-ray procedure comes from the radiation scattered within the body. That's why we expose only the area necessary.
- 2. Why have patients been shielded with lead during x-ray exposures in the past?** When shielding was introduced, it was believed that radiation could damage reproductive cells causing birth defects in future children or infertility. This has shown to be untrue for the amount of radiation used during imaging exams.
- 3. Doesn't shielding make me safer?** The amount of radiation used in most imaging exams is so small that the risk to you is very small or zero. The benefit to you from the procedure is far greater than the minimal risk from the radiation.
- 4. What is The Elliot doing to keep radiation exposure low?** The Elliot's advanced imaging equipment provides better images and uses less radiation than in the past. Our physicians and technologists use the smallest amount of radiation necessary.
- 5. But what's the harm in shielding?** Shields could cover up the parts of your body that your doctor needs to be able to see. If this happens, we may have to repeat your exam. Also, because modern equipment has automatic dose correction, the presence of a shield may trigger the machine to emit a higher dose than you would have received without a shield.
- 6. What if I'm pregnant?** Shielding does not provide a significant benefit to unborn children. Today's equipment can give us better information than ever before and can get precise images using much less radiation than in the past. Placing shielding over your belly can reduce the quality of the exam if it gets into the image. In some cases, this can increase the overall dose from the exam.
- 7. How about for children?** Typically, children receive a lower dose because The Elliot has specific procedures for children.
- 8. Why is my child not shielded if I am required to wear a lead apron while I am in the room with them?** Your doctor has decided that the benefit from having the information from the image is much higher than the risk from the radiation, which is very small or zero. As you are not being imaged, you should not receive any radiation, thus are required to wear a shield.
- 9. Why are Elliot staff wearing shielding during the exam?** As staff are not being imaged, they should not receive any radiation, thus are required to wear a shield.
- 10. Will you still shield me if I want you to?** We no longer recommend using lead shielding during imaging exams as there is no scientific need to do so. However, we will honor a request to provide it, as long as it will not compromise the exam.