

CARES FAQ: Summary for Public

Extracts from CARES FAQ

Three major issues (with suggested reasons) are:

Staff should no longer use foetal or gonadal shields on patients.

- *International radiation protection organizations have lowered the risk weighting to the gonads in every successive revision of their tissue risk weighting factors since such factors were introduced in 1977.*
- *There is no evidence that radiation from medical imaging damages reproductive cells such as eggs or those that produce sperm.*
- *The dose required to cause infertility is much higher than that used during a medical imaging exam.*
- *Any intended decrease in radiation exposure from shielding is negligible compared to the dose from radiation that is scattered within the patient's body. Shields do little or nothing to benefit the patient.*
- *Shields may cover up parts of your body that your doctor needs to be able to see. If this happens, we may have to repeat your image.*

The reason for changing the policy.

- *Advances in medical imaging technology, such as better detectors, have greatly reduced the amount of radiation required to create a quality image.*
- *The change in practice is due to improvements in imaging technology and a better understanding of how radiation might affect the body.*

Paediatric or pregnant patients should NOT have shielding

- *Foetal and gonadal shielding should not be used by default, regardless of the patient's age, sex, or pregnancy status.*
- *Clinical practice should be based on the best and most recent scientific evidence.*
- *if a pregnant patient with a suspected pulmonary embolism refuses to have imaging done without shielding, then the benefit of getting a timely diagnosis outweighs the risk posed by using shielding. Similarly, for the parent of a critically ill pediatric patient, the psychological benefit to anxious parents or caregivers may exceed the risk posed by shielding.*
- *In almost all cases, the amount of radiation used in medical imaging is much lower than what is known to cause any harm to an unborn baby. Shields will not reduce the amount of radiation to your unborn baby but may cover up parts of your body that your doctor needs to be able to see.*

Why is my child not shielded if I am required to wear a lead apron while I am in the room with them?

- *Your child's doctor wants an image so that he or she can better see what is going on inside your child's body. This exposes your child to a little bit of radiation.*
 - *Your doctor has thought about the benefits and risks to your child. He or she 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.*
 - *Because you aren't being imaged, there is no need for you to get any radiation and so we give you an apron to wear to make sure that you don't get any dose.*
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Amanda Perdomo BSc CMPS

Chair ACPSEM Radiology Specialty Group

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