

Radiology: Lead Shields or Aprons

For many years, patients had to wear lead shields when getting x-rays, CT scans or fluoroscopy. This is no longer the case.

No more shields for patients

- This change in practice is based on many years of research. This research proved that levels of radiation used in modern x-ray exams are so low that the risk of harm is very small to zero. Shields do not make the patient safer.
- We now know that using a lead shield also increases the risk of using more radiation than not shielding. The shield can cover a body part that the doctor needs to see. If this happens, we must take another x-ray which increases the amount of radiation exposure.
- Modern x-rays have a sensor. It tells us how much radiation is needed for each picture. A lead shield may get in the way of the sensor and the machine may give your child more radiation than is needed.

Parent or guardian in the room

You may stay with your child during the test. However, when we take the x-ray, a small amount of the radiation may bounce off your child and hit you. We want to protect you from these stray x-rays by having you wear a lead apron. The lead apron protects you from needless radiation. It is a Nationwide Children's Hospital policy to keep the levels of radiation exposure to the patient's family and our staff as low as possible.