

The guidance is written by a collaborative working party including representatives from the British Institute of Radiology, the Institute of Physics and Engineering in Medicine, Public Health England, the Royal College of Radiologists, the Society and College of Radiographers and the Society for Radiological Protection.

Patient Shielding Guidance published by
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Download the guidance at
www.bir.org.uk/patientshielding

www.bir.org.uk

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Frequently Asked Questions

Q: Why are the staff wearing protective clothing?

A: If you see the staff wearing protective clothing please remember that they are working with radiation for your benefit and regular exposure for them could be harmful as they do this every day.

Q: I am pregnant. How will the X-ray/scan affect my unborn child?

A: Every effort will be made to avoid exposing an unborn child wherever possible. Alternative ways of investigating your symptoms will have been considered before deciding on the use of X-rays. Scientific evidence shows that the amount of radiation used in medical imaging represents a very low risk to an unborn baby. Shields will not effectively reduce the amount of radiation to your unborn baby and may cover up parts of your body that your doctor needs to be able to see. They can also be uncomfortable for you and your baby. If you think you may be pregnant, please speak to your radiographer.

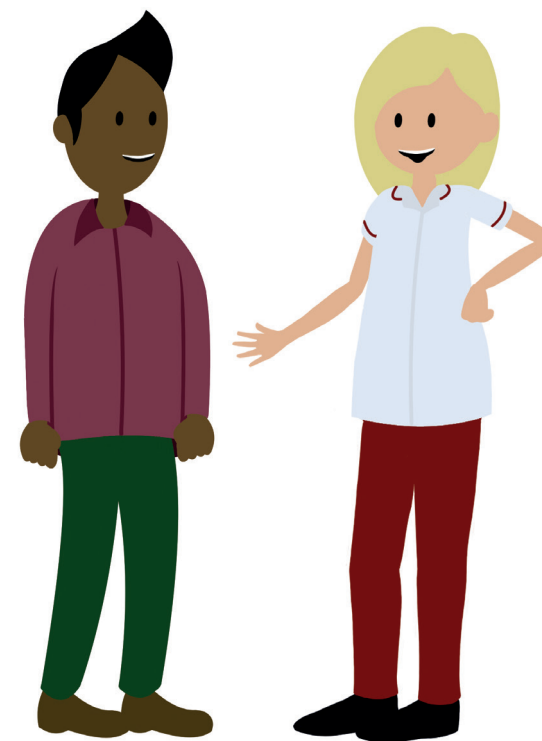
Q: Does exposure to radiation cause cancer?

It has been reported that there is an increased, albeit very low, risk of developing cancer in people exposed to low radiation doses. This potential risk is small compared to the benefits of medical imaging. Great care is taken to ensure every radiological imaging procedure is justified and appropriate, with the benefit to the patient outweighing any risk.

Q: I have had lots of X-rays in my lifetime. This might add up to a large amount of radiation exposure over the years. Is this dangerous?

Each and every decision to perform an X-ray is carefully considered, taking into account the results of any previous imaging. The cumulative radiation dose from medical procedures is very small in many individuals and, in any case, must be compared with the benefits of having had the X-rays over a lifetime.

X-rays and shielding: Your guide to safety and success



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When you have your X-ray, CT scan or any other procedure using imaging, you no longer need to wear a protective shield or apron to protect you against radiation.

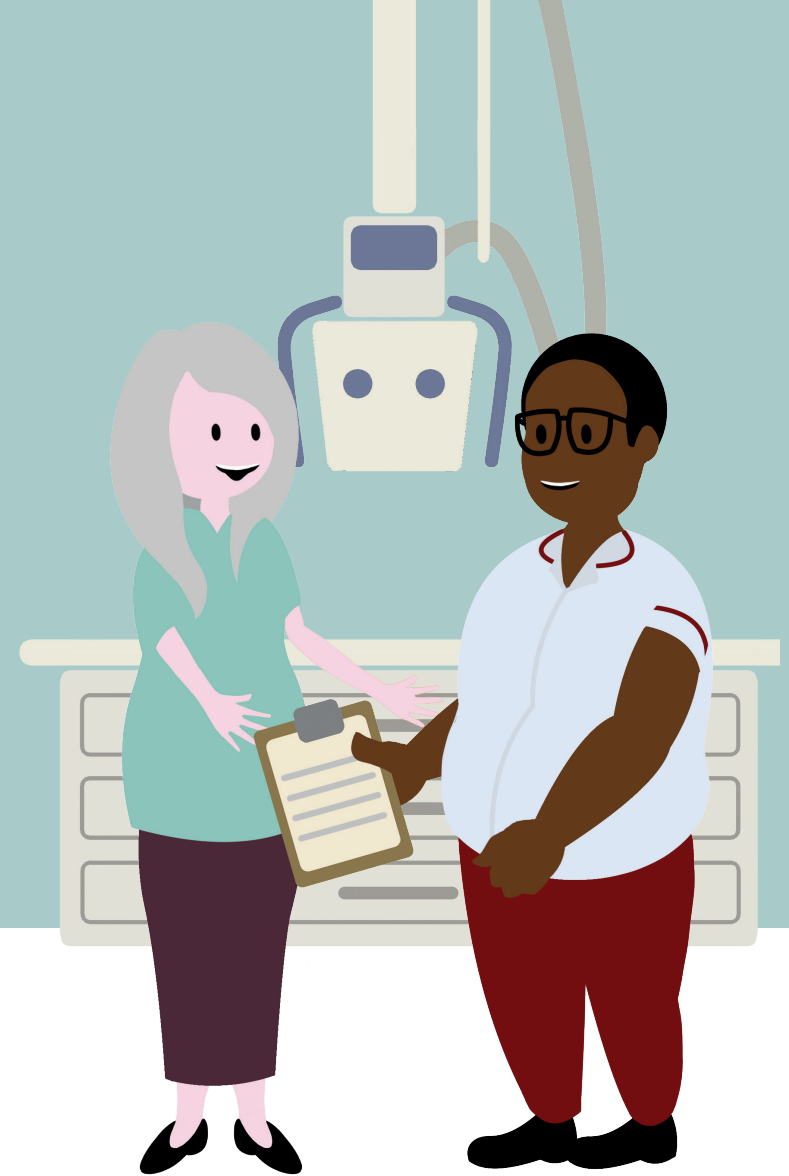
Scientific evidence shows that:

Due to improvements in technology, modern X-ray and CT machines can now achieve a good image with a low level of radiation. Staff will always make sure the benefit to you from having the X-ray or CT scan is much greater than the risk.

Using shielding is not an efficient way of reducing your radiation dose and sometimes the shielding or apron can prevent staff getting a good image. This might mean you have to have a repeat X-ray, which would give you more radiation.

Knowledge about the sensitivity of different parts of the body to radiation has improved. So, for example, there is no longer a need to protect your reproductive organs using contact shielding.

There are now far more effective ways of doing this.



Staff in the X-ray or CT room are trained to:



Ensure you are only exposed to enough radiation to achieve a good image



Position your body so that radiation is minimised



Make best use of technology to keep your dose as low as possible

If you have any concerns, please talk to staff. They are here to help you.