

Public Health

IOWA HHS

Fact Sheet Regarding Gonadal Shielding for Diagnostic Radiology Applications April 2023

On July 21, 2021 the Iowa Department of Health and Human Services changed the rule pertaining to use of gonadal shielding:

The rule revision to **IAC 641-41.1(3)"a"(6)** removes the specific requirement for gonadal shielding when the gonads are in the **primary beam area**.

There has consistently been questions as to what that change means. This document is intended to help clarify when gonadal shielding should be used and when it can be omitted from the procedure.

Clinical Applications of Rule Change

The rule change was not intended to remove gonadal shielding from ALL radiographic procedures. Gonadal shielding should only be omitted when:

- Performing radiography examinations of the abdomen and/or pelvis area
- The gonadal shielding can obscure important anatomical information
- The gonadal shielding can cause the x-ray equipment exposure time to increase unnecessarily

Examples in which gonadal shielding should still be used:

- Exams in which the gonadal area could be exposed to the primary radiation but the gonads are not in useful, primary beam area
 - You are performing an upper extremity radiographic exam with the patient sitting at the end of the table or an upright Bucky that has been placed in a horizontal position and the image receptor is placed directly above the gonadal area
- Any time overall patient exposure reduction can be accomplished
- To help alleviate patient concern or make them more comfortable

Reference Material

The Bureau of Radiological Health recommends all persons who administer diagnostic x-rays to visit the following sites explaining the new scientific background which lead to the change in the use of gonadal shielding:

<https://ncrponline.org/wp-content/themes/ncrp/PDFs/Statement13.pdf>

https://cdn.ymaws.com/www.crcpd.org/resource/collection/1B5B915F-2624-48A3-A809-09957F01C42F/POS-HA39-Gonadal_Shielding.pdf

<https://www.asrt.org/promotions/task-force-on-patient-shielding>

Questions

Please direct questions to radhealthia@idph.iowa.gov or (515) 802-6866.