

RSNA Statement on Medical Radiation Errors

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The Radiological Society of North America (RSNA) is committed to excellence in patient care through education and research.

- Medical imaging examinations are invaluable tools for improving the diagnosis and treatment of patients. Patients and their caregivers are a critical part of medical decision making and should be empowered to ask questions prior to a procedure if concerned about ionizing radiation used in medical imaging. Imaging that does not use ionizing radiation may be used as an alternative in some situations. However, patients should not avoid *clinically necessary* exams and procedures out of concerns about radiation dose or the potential for error. The overwhelming majority of imaging exams and radiation treatments are performed safely, according to prescribed technical standards and guidelines and without clinically significant error.
- To explore opportunities to improve patient safety through appropriate utilization, quality assurance and dose optimization, RSNA has partnered with the American College of Radiology (ACR), the American Association of Physicists in Medicine (AAPM) and the American Society of Radiologic Technologists (ASRT) to conduct the Image Wisely campaign. Image Wisely is designed to raise awareness and promote education about radiation protection for patients undergoing medical imaging examinations.
- ImageWisely.org, directed at physicians and other medical professionals, was officially launched in November 2010 at the RSNA annual meeting. Thousands of imaging professionals and referring physicians have taken the pledge to Image Wisely. The website's patient-directed content, which answers common patient questions about risks and benefits of medical imaging procedures, is available along with information on radiation exposure, contrast materials, anesthesia, radiation therapy procedures and other safety concerns on RadiologyInfo.org.
- RSNA is also an active member of the Alliance for Radiation Safety in Pediatric Imaging, which sponsors the [Image Gently](http://ImageGently.org) campaign, established in 2007, advocating radiation protection for children worldwide.
- To improve patient health and safety, appropriate precautions should always be taken to minimize radiation exposure through the use of the "As Low As Reasonably Achievable (ALARA)" principle.
- RSNA supports that all personnel involved in medical imaging and radiation therapy procedures performed on patients meet well-defined educational and credentialing criteria.
- To more quantitatively assess medical radiation exposure, RSNA supports the advancement of accreditation requirements for medical imaging and radiation therapy facilities—including the ASTRO-ACR joint accreditation of radiation oncology practices—a radiation dose index registry, and adherence to appropriate utilization criteria.

Through its peer-reviewed journals, education programs and annual scientific assembly, RSNA continually informs radiologists, medical physicists, radiation oncologists and other radiology professionals of the latest technologies and research developments designed to improve radiologist performance and enhance patient safety.

RSNA is a strong advocate for quality, safety and strict adherence to appropriateness criteria in medical imaging and radiation oncology and works with other organizations to improve reporting and prevent medical imaging errors. Through research, education and cooperative efforts with other organizations, RSNA continually works to improve the safety of medical imaging exams and to ensure that patients are receiving optimal benefits while minimizing potential risk.