LOUISIANA STATE UNIVERSITY HEALTH SCIENCES CENTER - SHREVEPORT

DIAGNOSTIC IMAGING OF PREGNANT PATIENTS

Purpose:

Imaging of pregnant patients demand extreme caution as both the mother and fetus are at greater risk of radiation induced injury. The intention of this policy is to provide guidance to ensure that the ionizing radiation exposure to the mother’s torso and subsequently the fetus is minimized.

Policy:

1. Imaging exams that are scheduled or ordered through Invision on female patients of childbearing age require that the pregnancy status and last menstrual period be entered.

2. Before an imaging or interventional procedure, the radiology technologist will inquire from all female patients of childbearing age if they are pregnant or if there is a possibility they are pregnant. If the patient is unsure or does not recall their last menstrual period a pregnancy test will be performed.

3. If a patient is pregnant, the specific situation will determine the appropriate course of action.
   a. If the exam is to be above the abdomen or below the hips, the technologist is to proceed with the exam and use lead aprons to shield the abdomen and pelvis.
   b. If an exam places the fetus in the x-ray beam the technologist will contact the radiologist for guidance before proceeding with the exam.

   1) If the fetus is to be in the direct x-ray beam, the radiologist and ordering physician should work to find options to obtain the needed diagnostic information without using ionizing radiation. If it is deemed necessary to perform the exam, the patient should be involved in the decision to proceed. The ordering physician should discuss with the patient the reason for the test and inform the patient of the associated risks and benefits. The patient will be required to sign an informed consent.

   2) If the dose to be used is estimated to exceed 100mGy, a formal calculation will be conducted by a medical physicist. The patient and/or family will be counseled about the risks to the fetus. The ordering physician and radiologist will record in the chart the circumstances and medical justification for the exam. The patient will be required to sign an informed consent.
4. Radiology technologists will adhere to the following principles when imaging pregnant patients. Any deviations from these guidelines require an order from a staff radiologist.

   a. Exposures are limited to those specifically ordered or contained in the ordered protocol.
   b. Precise collimation and shielding will be used whenever possible.
   c. Breast shields are to be used on all female patients.
   d. Fluoroscopy will be limited to short bursts. All procedures are to be timed and the time is to be recorded in the Radiology Information System along with the kVp and mA.
   e. Repeat exposures due to technical errors are not to be performed without approval from the radiologist.
   f. For CT exams of the abdomen and pelvis the radiologist will be consulted to provide explicit instructions for the scan protocol in order to minimize dose.

   [Administrator's signature]
   Administrator

   10/20/11
   Date

   Approved by Clinical Board: 8/18/09, 10/18/11
   Written: 7/09
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