Use of Breast Shields

Purpose: To reduce the amount of scatter radiation absorbed by female breast tissue during a CT scan procedure of the chest or abdomen.

Policy:

1. AttenuRad bismuth impregnated radiation protection shields for the breast have been obtained and are available for use in the CT section of Radiology.
2. All females undergoing computed tomography of the chest or any exam in which the breast may be exposed to scatter radiation shall be protected using the breast shield.
3. The scout series for the exam must be completed prior to placement of the shield. This protects the integrity of the scanner’s automatic tube current modulation.
4. After the scout series is completed place the appropriate sized (medium or large) shield across the chest covering the breast area.
5. Patient should be covered with clean bed linens and shield placed on top of provided foam pad.
6. All breast tissue should be covered by the shield.
7. The shield or placement thereof should not compromise life support lines or interfere with monitoring devices in the critically ill patient.
8. In the event that a breast shield cannot be used, the technologist must document the reason in the exam record (RIS).

Policy Enforcement:

The use of breast shields is part of the department’s commitment to patient safety and therefore will be reviewed for compliance. If a technologist does not use a breast shield when indicated and does not document the reason, a disciplinary review will be initiated. If discipline is indicated it will follow the progressive action process:

1. First Occurrence – Verbal counseling and additional education that will be determined by the section manager and department director.
3. Third Occurrence – Written reprimand and review by Human Resources for consideration of additional action such as suspension or termination.

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