



IMPORTANT NOTICE: EFFECTIVE AUGUST 1, 2026

Effective August 1, 2026, Middlesex Hospital Alliance will discontinue the routine use of lead shielding (lead aprons) for patients during diagnostic imaging exams. This change reflects current scientific evidence, modern imaging technology and aligns our practices with hospitals across Canada and around the world.

In the past, lead shielding was standard practice to protect reproductive organs and other internal structures during imaging. However, updated research and modern equipment design now confirm that this practice is no longer necessary, and in some situations can interfere with safe, accurate imaging.

This change follows the recommendations of the Canadian Organization of Medical Physicists, Canadian Association of Radiologists, Canadian Association of Medical Radiation Technologists, and American Association of Physicists in Medicine.

FAQs

Why is lead shielding no longer used?

Modern X-ray equipment uses very low levels of radiation and is highly precise. Research shows that lead aprons do not improve patient safety and may interfere with imaging, sometimes leading to repeat exams.

Does shielding protect me from radiation?

In most cases, no. Shielding often does not provide additional protection and may block important images or increase the need for repeat X-rays.

What if I'm pregnant?

The amount of radiation used in X-rays is very low and has not been shown to harm you or your baby. Shielding may cover important anatomy and is not recommended.

Will radiation affect fertility or future children?

There is no evidence that the small amount of radiation used in medical imaging affects fertility or future children.

Can I still request a lead apron?

Yes. While it is not recommended, a lead apron can be provided if it will not interfere with the image.

Why do staff or caregivers still wear lead aprons?

Staff are exposed to X-rays more frequently throughout the day, so shielding helps reduce cumulative exposure. Caregivers or family members in the room should also wear shielding since they are not being imaged.