

Recent media coverage regarding mammography and radiation to the thyroid has raised awareness about radiation safety. The Iowa Department of Public Health, Bureau of Radiologic Health supports the use of patient shielding for radiography exams as long as the shield itself does not interfere with the imaging study. During a mammogram, the use of a thyroid shield is not recommended since the shield would make it difficult to optimize positioning and therefore interfere with the diagnosis. The thyroid is not in the direct X-ray beam during mammography and receives only a tiny amount of scattered X-rays. Each year, the State of Iowa tests the average glandular dose for each mammography unit. This test ensures that breast tissue is receiving a dose below the national standard and thus the scatter radiation the thyroid receives is kept to a minimum.

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