

February 2, 2026

Important Update

Discontinuation of patient lead shielding in X-ray imaging at LHSC and St. Joseph's Health Care London

Dear referring providers,

Effective immediately, London Health Sciences Centre (LHSC) and St. Joseph's Health Care London have discontinued the use of lead shielding for patients during diagnostic X-rays.

This update is based on improvements in imaging technology and scientific evidence, bringing us in line with other hospitals around the world. The updated practice will apply to all patients, regardless of age, sex, or pregnancy status.

What this means for referring providers:

- This change does not impact how you request X-rays.
- The A.L.A.R.A. (As Low As Reasonably Achievable) principle remains central to radiation safety.
- Staff continue to follow all protective measures: wearing lead PPE, radiation badges, minimizing exposure time and maximizing distance.

Why the change?

- Lead shields can block important anatomy, interfere with image quality, or cause X-ray equipment to use more radiation than necessary.
- Lead shielding was introduced in the 1950s when our understanding of radiation and technology was limited.
- Current diagnostic X-ray equipment is designed to reduce overexposure and uses 95 per cent less radiation than previous equipment, eliminating the need for lead shields.

Patient considerations:

- In rare cases, such as patients experiencing significant anxiety about the absence of shielding, medical radiation technologists may consider the use of lead shielding to support overall wellbeing of the patient, if it does not interfere with the diagnostic exam.

The following Canadian professional associations listed below, support the cessation of patient lead shielding during diagnostic X-rays:

- [Canadian Association of Radiologists](#)
- [Canadian Association of Medical Radiation Technologists](#)
- [Canadian Organization of Medical Physicists](#)
- [Health Canada Safety Code 35](#)

The following Canadian hospitals/networks have already discontinued the use of lead shields during diagnostic X-rays:

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| • St. Joseph's HealthCare Hamilton | • Waterloo Region Health Network |
| • Hamilton Health Sciences Centre | • Vancouver Coastal Health |
| • Oak Valley Health, Markham | • Manitoba Shared Health |

Please feel free to direct your patients to our websites for more information:

[London Health Sciences Centre Medical Imaging](#)
[St. Joseph's Health Care London Medical Imaging](#)

Sincerely,

Dr. Narinder Paul,
City-wide Chief/Chair of Medical Imaging

Dr. Adam Dukelow,
Integrated Vice President, Medical and Academic Affairs