

## Where can I get more information?

- CDC Public Response Line  
1-800-311-3435 / [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)
- Food and Drug Administration  
1-888-463-6332 / [www.FDA.gov](http://www.FDA.gov)
- American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists  
(202) 638-5577 / [www.acog.gov](http://www.acog.gov)
- American College of Radiology  
703-648-8900 / [www.acr.org](http://www.acr.org)
- HIPAA – U.S. Department of Health and Human Resources  
1-877-696-6775 / [www.hhs.gov](http://www.hhs.gov)

**N.C. Radiation Protection Section  
Division of Health Service Regulation  
[www.ncradiation.net](http://www.ncradiation.net)  
(919) 814-2250**

### Inform-a-Tech



N.C. Radiation Protection Section  
5505 Creedmoor Road,  
Suite 100 Raleigh, NC 27612

Mailing Address:  
1645 Mail Service Center  
Raleigh, NC 27699-1645  
Phone: 919-814-2250



N.C. Department of Health & Human Services  
Division of Health Service Regulation  
Radiation Protection Section  
[www.dhhs.nc.gov](http://www.dhhs.nc.gov) • [www.ncradiation.net](http://www.ncradiation.net)  
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# Inform-a-Tech



**Radiation Safety  
During Pregnancy:  
Find out how to  
reduce the risk**

## What is radiation, and how does it impact me when I get an X-ray?

Radiation is energy that comes from a source and travels through space and may be able to penetrate various materials.

There are two types – non-ionizing and ionizing. X-ray machines make ionizing radiation. Doctors and X-ray technologists or technicians (also known as techs) are trained to keep your exposure to radiation as low as possible. That's why sometimes you wear a lead apron when having your X-rays.

***It is to protect you and your baby!***



# Inform-a-Tech

## Radiation Safety During Pregnancy: Find out how to reduce the risk

### A Healthy Pregnancy

Pregnancy is a wonderful time for you and your unborn baby. Ensuring your health as well as the health of your baby is essential. Eating right, exercising, taking vitamins and stopping smoking and alcohol consumption are all important considerations. It is also important to know about medical radiation procedures during pregnancy.

### Every woman is asked an important question before an X-ray examination: Is there any chance you may be or could be pregnant?

X-ray techs ask this question to protect the health of your unborn baby. Problem-solving or diagnostic X-rays give a doctor important, sometimes life-saving information. Like many things, X-rays have risks and benefits. Your doctor may feel that a diagnostic X-ray is needed when you're not feeling well.

### What are the risks from X-rays?

There is little risk to a baby during regular X-rays – dental, mammogram, chest, hand, foot or head – that do not directly expose a pregnant woman's abdomen. This is because the X-ray is focused only on the area of interest. This reduces exposure to other areas of the body. The risk of not having a needed X-ray could be much greater than the risk from the radiation. The risk to you and your unborn child is small if an X-ray is needed of your abdomen, but even small risks should not be taken if they are not needed.

### How can I reduce the risk to my baby?

You can reduce those risks by telling your doctor or X-ray tech if you are, or think you might be, pregnant, especially when an abdominal X-ray is required. Depending on your medical needs, the doctor may decide

not to have the X-ray exam or continue as planned because the risk is small. Talk to your doctor about the need for an X-ray examination and understand the reason X-rays are requested in your particular case.

### Why is this so very important?

Fetuses are sensitive to radiation during their early development, specifically between weeks 2 and 15. A mother's abdomen protects her baby from radioactive sources outside her body. This means the radiation dose to the fetus is lower than the dose to the mother for most radiation exposure.

**It is important for women who are concerned about radiation exposure to their unborn babies to talk with their doctor.**

**All employees, students and business associates of any hospital or medical facility are accountable to HIPAA regulations.**

### Are my answers to a doctor's questions during an X-ray procedure protected?

Yes. Anything you discuss with your doctor is protected under the federal Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act, or HIPAA. This federal law protects the use and sharing of a patient's medical information, regardless of how it is collected (verbal, written and electronically). All information given during your visit to an X-ray tech or doctor is protected under this policy.

### What information is protected?

- Information that would identify an individual (patient).
- Any information that relates to a patient's health, treatment or finances.

