COVID-19 Medical Imaging Safety

Current public health guidance emphasizes layered prevention strategies to reduce the transmission of respiratory viruses, including COVID-19. Recommended precautions include staying up to date with vaccination(s), practicing good hand hygiene, maintaining physical distance when appropriate, improving ventilation, and using masks when respiratory symptoms are present or when recommended by public health authorities.

After receiving the COVID-19 vaccine, some patients may develop temporary swelling of lymph nodes, particularly in their underarm area. These enlarged nodes can mimic the appearance of serious conditions on mammography or screening breast ultrasound images. However, there is no need to delay chest x-ray or mammography exams in patients who have no symptoms of serious disease.

For more information about breast and chest imaging, see the Mammography (https://www.radiologyinfo.org/en/info/mammo) and Chest CT (https://www.radiologyinfo.org/en/info/chestct) pages.

Is it Safe to Have an Imaging Exam Now?

Radiologists and other health professionals continue to follow infection prevention protocols designed to protect patients and staff. These may include enhanced cleaning procedures, appropriate use of personal protective equipment (PPE), and workflow adjustments to reduce exposure risk.

Talk to your doctor if you have any concerns about seeking medical care or undergoing medical imaging. In most cases, the benefit of timely medical care and imaging to your overall health far outweighs any possible risks related to respiratory viruses.

Always tell your imaging facility before you arrive if you have respiratory symptoms and if you have been in physical contact with anyone who has COVID-19. Imaging professionals can implement additional precautions when needed to ensure safe care.

Patients are encouraged to discuss any concerns with their referring provider or imaging facility prior to their appointment.

Trusted, recognized sources of credible COVID-19 information may be found at RadiologyInfo.org (https://www.radiologyinfo.org/) , the World Health Organization (WHO) (https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019) , and the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (https://www.cdc.gov/) . For more information, visit:

- Pneumonia (http://www.radiologyinfo.orgpneumonia) *(RadiologyInfo.org)*
- Chest CT (http://www.radiologyinfo.orgchestct) *(RadiologyInfo.org)*
- Mammography (http://www.radiologyinfo.orgmammo) *(RadiologyInfo.org)*
- US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: Respiratory Virus Guidance (https://www.cdc.gov/respiratory-viruses/guidance/respiratory-virus-guidance.html)

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