



cancer care
ontario
ontario breast
screening program

action cancer
ontario
programme ontarien de dépistage
du cancer du sein

TO: OBSP Regional Administrators
FROM: Dr. Rene Shumak
DATE: April 5, 2011
SUBJECT: Thyroid Shields

Recent American media reports (e.g. Dr. Oz) have highlighted the use of thyroid shields/collars during routine mammography as a means to minimize exposure to radiation during the procedure. This has raised concerns amongst Ontario Breast Screening Program (OBSP) clients.

Research indicates that the risk of thyroid cancer due to medical diagnostic x-rays, if any, is very small. Risk decreases markedly with age.

According to the OBSP Mammography Quality Control X-Ray Safety Policy and Procedures (2004): "X-ray shielding devices are not required for patient protection; however, they can be used to allay fear of radiation exposure."

The use of thyroid shields is not indicated for mammography. The dose to the thyroid from mammography is negligible and there is no scientific reason to supply thyroid collars for this examination.

Please distribute this message to all OBSP sites in your region.

Many Thanks,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rene Shumak".

Dr. Rene S. Shumak
Radiologist-in-Chief
Ontario Breast Screening Program
Cancer Care Ontario
P. 416-971-9800 x3536
F. 416-971-6888
Rene.Shumak@cancercare.on.ca