

Patient Exposure to Radiation Is Avoidable

Radiation serves many purposes. Radiation has several medical advantages including revealing hidden problems like broken bones, lung lesions, heart defects and tumors. Radiation is also used to treat cancer, and it even cures certain cancers.

However, radiation also has medical disadvantages and can cause harmful effects. Radiation can damage DNA. Potentially most notably, radiation can cause cancer 10 to 20 years after exposure to it. In fact, according to the New York Times, CT scans deliver up to 500 times as much radiation as other X-rays and is thought to be responsible for 1.5 percent of all cancers in the United States.

When new security devices were installed at airports across the United States in an attempt to curb terrorist attacks, concern rose over the radiation exposure from the new devices that travelers would be subject to.

Medical professionals have cautioned against the use of radiology tests, and believe radiology is overused unnecessarily. Experts say the way to get the benefits out of radiation and minimize the harm is to balance the potential risks against the known benefits. Experts say that this important balancing act is often overlooked by medical professionals who order radiology tests too quickly.

In addition to the potential harmful effects of radiation, ordering unnecessary radiation tests causes patients unnecessary costs.

According to the New York Times, some of the newest radiology tests have not been proven to yield better results than non-radiology based testing. This should be factored into doctor's decisions whether or not to order radiation testing.

Doctors also order many radiation-based tests because insurers pay based on the number of tests performed. As a result, doctors are rewarded for conducting more radiation based testing, even if the test is not medically necessary.

To avoid unnecessary exposure to radiation, patients should not leave the responsibility on doctors, since all doctors do not properly balance the risks against the benefits. Patients should ask their doctors what the tests are for and why it is necessary.

[Medical malpractice attorney](#) can help you hold medical professionals liable for their inattentiveness to the risks of radiation testing and for ordering tests for improper reasons.