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Dental X-Rays, Mammograms, Thyroid cancer

On Wednesday, Dr. Oz had a show on the fastest growing cancer in women, thyroid cancer. It was a very interesting program and he mentioned that the increase could possibly be related to the use of **dental x-rays** and **mammograms**. He demonstrated that on the apron the dentist puts on you for your dental x-rays there is a little flap that can be lifted up and wrapped around your neck. Many dentists don't bother to use it. Also, there is something called a "thyroid guard" for use during mammograms.

By coincidence, I had my yearly mammogram yesterday. I felt a little silly, but I asked about the guard and sure enough, the technician had one in a drawer. I asked why it wasn't routinely used. Answer: "I don't know. You have to ask for it." Well, if I hadn't seen the show, how would I have known to ask?

We often rely on health care experts to do the right thing, but word to the wise is, do not abdicate responsibility for your own health completely. Ask questions, advocate for yourself in the big busy world of medicine.