

# VirtualDose™ User Guide



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# 1. Introduction

The purpose of this document is to assist the user in the operation of the VirtualDose Software.

For the best use experience, we suggest using the Google Chrome web browser.

## 2. Accessing the web-based VirtualDose Software

VirtualDose can be accessed from a web browser directly at [www.virtual-dose.com](http://www.virtual-dose.com) or [www.virtual-dose-eu.com](http://www.virtual-dose-eu.com) (the first being physically located within the US, and the second within the EU). Both sites are exact mirrors, and user credentials may be used at either site (account changes are synchronized once per hour, so changes on one site will not be immediately available on the other).

To access the VirtualDose software, users need a pre-assigned username and password. Enter the user name and password are entered in the available fields, and click the “Log in” button to enter the site.

Beneath the login fields are two additional options:

- “Forget your password?”: use this option to reset your password – you will need access to the email you used to register your account. If you no longer have access to that email, contact [support@virtualphantoms.com](mailto:support@virtualphantoms.com) for assistance.
- “Register with a registration code”: if you have been provided a registration code and have not yet selected your login credentials, click here to set up your account

There is additionally a button for individuals who are not currently subscribers to VirtualDose to learn more about the system and to purchase a subscription.

**VIRTUAL PHANTOMS, INC.** Perfecting radiation dose management through innovative simulation technologies

## VirtualDose Login

Account name

Password

Remember my login  Yes

**Login**

*We strongly advise you to use Google Chrome for the best use experience.*

[Forgot password?](#)

[Register](#) with a registration code.

[Learn More and Purchase](#)

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Figure 1. Log in page

The VirtualDose system consists of three available tools, **VirtualDoseCT**, for Computed Tomography dose, **VirtualDoseIR**, for Interventional Radiology/Fluoroscopy dose, and **VirtualDoseDX**, for diagnostic radiographic x-ray dose. An individual user account may have permission to use one or more of the tools.

If the “login” is successful, the main web-based interface will be displayed, depending upon the account permissions. The user interface of the VirtualDose software tool is friendly and easy-to-use.

### 3. VirtualDoseCT Software Tool User Interface

VirtualDose-CT

Patient Phantoms: Adult Male - RPI

Mode: Scanner Selection CTDIvol

Scan Protocol: Abdomen

kVp: 120

CTDIvol: 9.78

Z-Over Scan Length(mm): No Yes

Bowtie filters: Head Body

Beam Collimation(mm): 20

Organ Weighting Scheme: ICRP103 ICRP60

Tube Current Modulation: No Yes

Calculate Dose Create PDF Report

Figure 2. VirtualDoseCT Software Tool User Interface

There are several input parameters that are entered from the main interface. The default screen is shown in Figure 2. There are two modes of entering the scanner output information: CTDIvol (default) mode and Scanner Selection mode. Both modes have a number of common elements, with the differences outlined below.

The user selects or inputs these parameters of the CT scan before performing the patient dose calculation (some drop-down menus depend on previous choices, so it is generally best to enter values from left to right where applicable). The common elements of the user interface include:

- (1). Virtual Patient Selection
- (2). Scan Protocol List
- (3). Tube Current Modulation
- (4). Z-Over scan length
- (5). Tissue weighting factors


In the default CTDIvol entry mode, the available entries are:

- (1). CTDIvol
- (2). Bow Tie Filter Type
- (3). Beam Collimation
- (4). kVp

When switching to the Scanner Selection mode, the input form updates to include the following:

- (1). CT Scanner
- (2). Bow Tie Filter Type
- (3). Beam Collimation
- (4). kVp
- (5). mAs
- (6). CTDI<sub>w</sub>
- (7). Pitch

### **Virtual patient**

A user must first select a “virtual patient” best representing the individual being scanned. The phantom can be selected directly from the “Patient Phantoms” dropdown list or by entering patient biometric information. Clicking the magnifying glass  will reveal inputs for patient age, sex, height, and weight.

VirtualDose has 25 virtual patients in total, including 50th percentile adults named RPI-Adult-Male (RPI-AM) and RPI-Adult-Female (RPI-AF), pediatric patients of both male and female at different ages (newborn, 1-, 5-, 10-, and 15-year-old), pregnant females at three gestational stages (3-,6-, and 9-month), and a set of obese male and female patients (normal-weight, over-weight, obese level-I, obese level-II, and morbidly obese, as defined by WHO guidelines).

### **Scan protocol**

The next step is to choose a scan protocol for the selected “Virtual Patient” from the “Scan Protocol” dropdown list. When selected, the relevant scan range will then show above the “Virtual Patient” with a red color highlight, as shown in Figure 4.

Virtual dose provides 11 pre-defined protocols including head, neck, chest, heart/cardiac, abdomen, liver, kidney, colon, pelvis, abdomen-pelvis and CAP for the users to choose. Any scan range can be selected manually by using mouse to drag the green-colored sliders to specify the scan range on the “Virtual Patient.” The cross-section images are provided to help the user to better define the start point and the end point of the scan.

In CTDIvol Entry Mode:

**CTDIvol**

The CTDIvol field is used to enter the scan CTDIvol for the scan range selected. If tube current modulation is used, this should represent the average CTDIvol over that range (see below).

**Bowtie filter**

There are two types of bowtie filters, head and body. VirtualDose can choose the bowtie filter automatically based on the selected protocols, with the head filter used for head and neck protocols, and body filter for all other protocols. The user can override this automatic selection. Take particular care with pediatric protocols that are established using the head bowtie filter.

**Beam Collimation & kVp**

Beam Collimation & kVp are entered into the text fields provided. Beam collimation is the physical beam width at the patient, not the logical slice thickness.

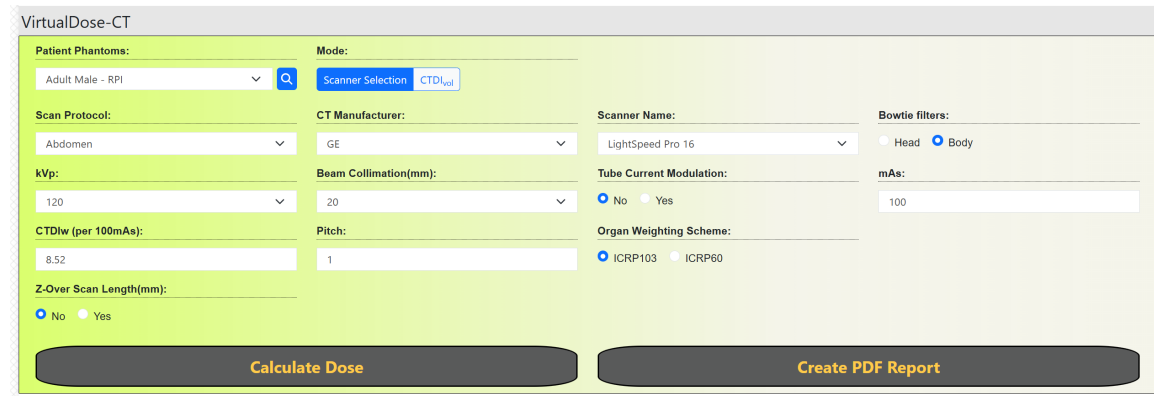


Figure 3. VirtualDoseCT Software Tool User Interface in Scanner Selection Mode

In Scanner Selection Mode:

Note: When VirtualDose was first published, there were still CT machines in common use that did not display or store in their output a value of CTDIvol, but may only show the mAs for the scan, and a common approach at the time led the system to be based on the CTDIw per 100 mAs that was known for the different machines, and used the mAs to determine the CTDIvol.

In today's environment, it is rare that CTDIvol would not be available to enter directly. However, this mode is maintained for instances where it might be necessary. Also, as modern machines use of tube current modulation has become standard practice, it has become harder to obtain standardized constant current CTDI values. Scanner-specific values will be added for new models as they become available, but they are not necessary for the calculation.

## **CT scanner**

After specifying the scan range, user may select the CT scanner. First select a CT manufacturer from the dropdown list, manufacturers like GE, Siemens, Philips, Toshiba, Elscint and Picker are included in the list. Then choose the model of the CT scanner of the selected manufacturer from the scanner name dropdown list. If the scanner model is unknown, there is an option to select a “Generic Scanner.”

## **Bowtie filter**

The bowtie filter radio buttons operate the same as they do in CTDIvol entry mode.

## **Beam Collimation & kVp**

In scanner selection mode, Beam Collimation & kVp are selected from the dropdown list after the scanner is chosen. The beam collimation & kVp dropdown list will update automatically based on the available options for the chosen scanner.

## **mAs**

Enter the value for the mAs per rotation in the scan. When the tube current modulation option is selected, this should be the average mAs per rotation for the entire scan. When tube current modulation is not in use, this will be a constant value.

## **CTDIw (per 100 mAs)**

CTDIw, or weighted CTDI represents the scanner output. When available, the system will supply a default value of the CTDIw per 100 mAs (sometimes called the normalized CTDIw) for the selected scanner. Be sure to check that this value is appropriate for your specific application. The value used in the calculation will be adjusted based on the mAs entered.

To check, recall that  $CTDI_{vol} = CTDI_w / pitch$ , so  $CTDI_w = CTDI_{vol} \times pitch$ . If the CTDIw for the scanner and/or the mAs is not available, and you only have the CTDIvol to use, you can use the default CTDIvol entry mode.

## **Pitch**

The value of pitch can be acquired from the scanner console or CT DICOM files. Input the value into the text box.

Further selection in either mode:

### **Tube Current Modulation**

Select “Yes” to approximate the behavior of tube current modulation on the CT system. When selected, the values of mAs and CTDI<sub>w</sub> below will be taken to be the average of the scan, instead of constant values.

### **Tissue weighting factors**

Two set of tissue weighting factors (ICRP103 and ICRP60) are available. Based on the selection, the appropriate methodology for calculating the displayed Remainder Dose and Effective Dose will be used.

### **Z-Over scan length**

If the user needs to consider Z-over scan length, select “Yes” and input the length of the overscan region in mm for the superior and inferior ends of the scan.

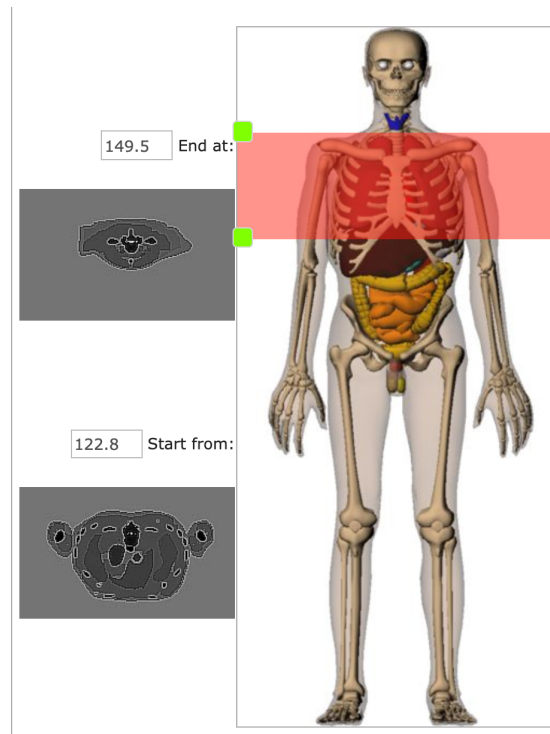
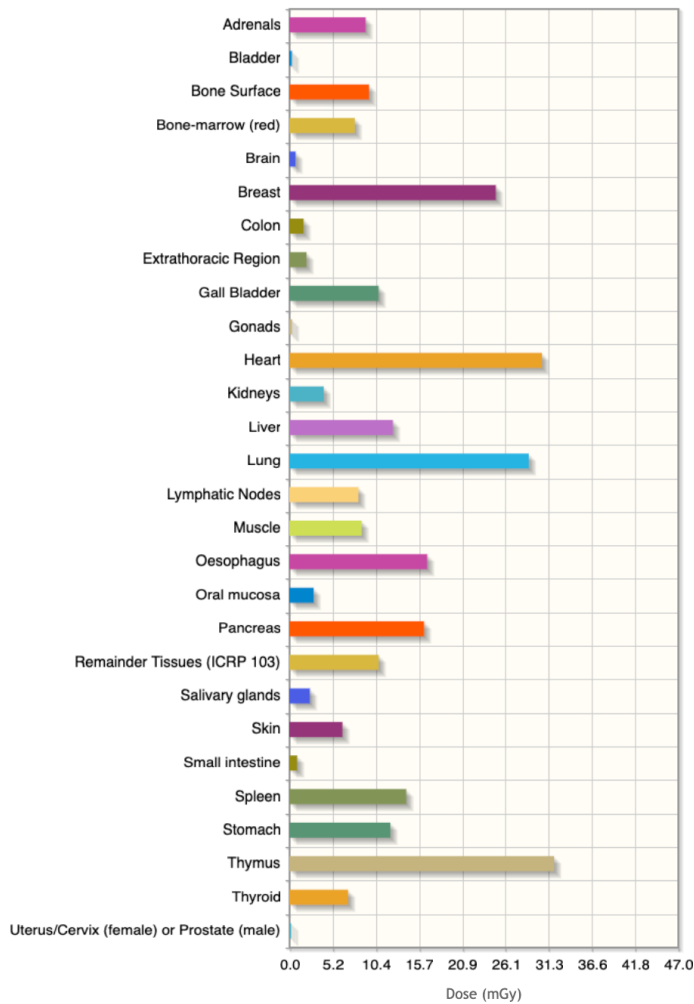


Figure 4. “Virtual Patient” shown within the browser

To calculate the CT dose based on the selected settings, click the “Calculate Dose” button and the results will be immediately plotted and tabulated in the third section of the main user interface, as shown in Figure 5.



Organ Dose	
Organ/Tissue Name	Dose (mGy)
Bladder	0.31
Bone Surface	9.61
Bone-marrow (red)	7.89
Brain	0.76
Breast	24.89
Colon	1.73
Gonads	0.32
Liver	12.49
Lung	28.86
Oesophagus	16.62
Remainder Tissues (ICRP 103)	10.77
Salivary glands	2.48
Skin	6.40
Stomach	12.18
Thyroid	7.08
<b>Effective Dose (mSv): 12.04</b>	

Remainder Organs	
Organ/Tissue Name	Dose (mGy)
Adrenals	9.20
Extrathoracic Region	2.08
Gall Bladder	10.76
Heart	30.44
Kidneys	4.15
Lymphatic Nodes	8.33
Muscle	8.72
Oral mucosa	2.93
Pancreas	16.24
Small intestine	0.95
Spleen	14.09
Thymus	31.90
Uterus/Cervix (female) or Prostate (male)	0.23

Figure 5. Plotted and tabulated dose results

The calculated data may be saved to a PDF report form by selecting the “Generate PDF Report” button. This will generate a report form with the recording of the parameters used for the calculation, a schematic of the patient phantom and the scan range, and a list of the organ dose results.

## 4. VirtualDoseIR Software Tool

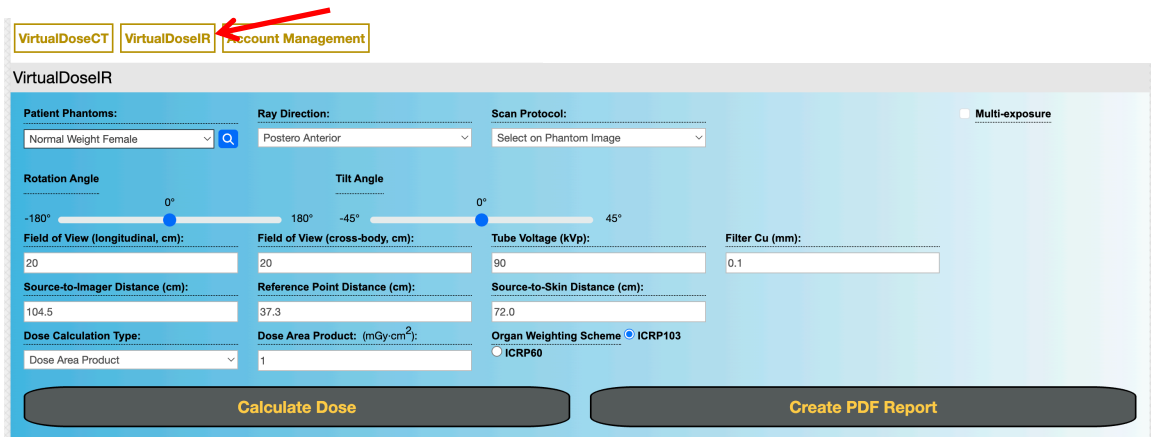



Figure 6. VirtualDose-IR™ Software Tool User Interface

There are several input parameters that are entered from the main interface. Some options depend on previous selections – a warning will be generated if selections are not made in the correct order. The main components of the user interface include:

- 1) Virtual Patient List
- 2) Ray direction (active after patient is selected)
  - a. Standard projections selected from dropdown list, or
  - b. Rotation angle and tilt angle selected using sliders
- 3) Beam position selection (appears after patient is selected)
  - a. Anatomical markers selected from “Scan Protocol” dropdown
  - b. Manual selection on the phantom image
- 4) Field of View: longitudinal (superior/inferior) and cross-body (left/right)
- 5) Tube Voltage
- 6) Cu Filter thickness
- 7) Source to Imager distance
- 8) Reference Point distance
- 9) Source to Skin distance
- 10) Dose Calculation Type List
- 11) Organ Weighting Scheme

### *Virtual patient*

The user must first select a “virtual patient” first from the “Patient Phantoms” dropdown list, as shown in Figure 6. VirtualDoseIR has 23 virtual patients in

total, including 50th percentile adults named RPI-Adult-Male (RPI-AM) and RPI-Adult-Female (RPI-AF), reference adults for the Chinese population (Male – USTC and Female – USTC), pediatric patients of both male and female at different ages (5-, 10-, and 15-year-old), pregnant females at three gestational stages (3-, 6-, and 9month), and a set of obese male and female patients (normal-weight, over-weight, obese level-I, obese level-II, and morbidly obese, as defined by WHO guidelines). The phantom can be selected directly from the “Patient Phantoms” dropdown list or by entering patient biometric information. Clicking the magnifying glass  will reveal inputs for patient age, sex, height, and weight. The patient is assumed to be lying on a 2.15 mm Al equivalent thickness operating bed.

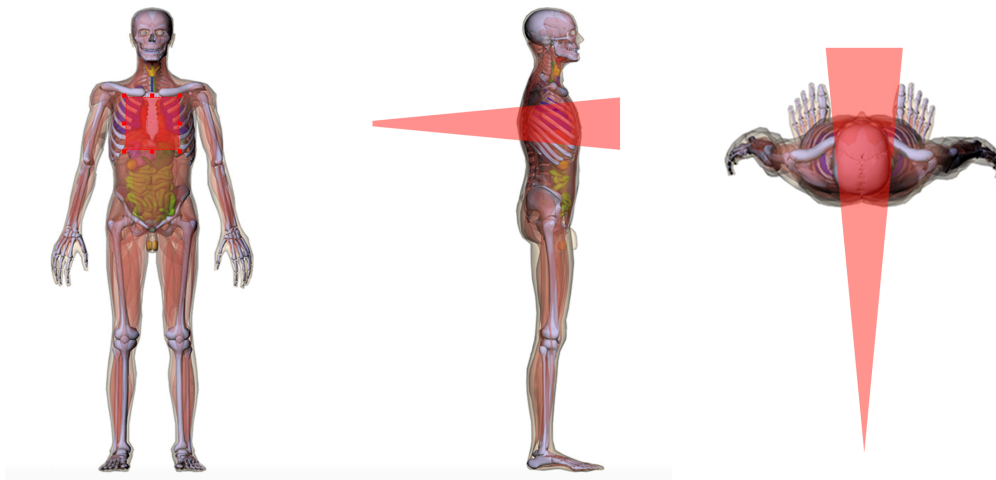


Figure 7. “Virtual Patient” as shown within the browser

#### *Ray direction*

The next step is to choose the direction of the x-ray beam for the selected “Virtual Patient”. Users can select a standard direction from the dropdown list, or adjust manually using the sliders for the rotational angle and tilt angle. As the projection is updated, a representation will be displayed on the “Virtual Patient” in red color on front, side, and top projections of the patient as shown on Figure 7. VirtualDose provides 10 pre-defined standard directions including posterior-anterior, anterior-posterior, left and right lateral, left and right anterior oblique, left and right posterior oblique and cranial and caudal (from the posterior side).

#### *Beam Position and Field of View selection*

When the beam direction is chosen, the field location and size can be selected. Position can be specified either using the “Scan Protocol” dropdown, which will center the field on one of the given target location on the phantom, or by

manually adjusting the field on the patient image. The position can be adjusted by click-and-drag, or position and size can be adjusted by grabbing the handles at the edges of the field. The size can also be adjusted using the “Field of View” entry boxes indicating the longitudinal (superior-inferior) and cross-body (left-right) size of the field (these values are updated automatically when dragging the handles on the image). When the entries are updated, the size of the field on the patient image will also update accordingly (with the center position remaining fixed). Note that the dimensions represent the size of the field at the imager.

### *Tube Voltage & Filter Cu*

Tube Voltage and Cu filter thickness are entered in the entry boxes on the screen. The acceptable ranges for these values are 55-120 kVp and 0-0.3 mm Cu (entries outside those ranges will be set to maximum or minimum). Users should note that in addition to the copper filtration, there is a 3.5mm Al filter that is an inherent filter applied to all X-ray tubes and is not selectable by the user.

### *Reference Distances*

Three reference distances are specified with default values provided: the source-to-imager distance, the source-to-skin distance, and the position of the reference point (in distance from x-ray source). The default reference point distance is taken as 15 cm from the isocenter (in the direction of the source) and the default source to skin distance is determined from the patient selected and the beam direction. Note that both of these values are reset to defaults when the source-to-imager distances is changed.

### *Dose Calculation Type*

There are three kinds of dose output measurement methods that users can choose in the dropdown list to provide the fluoroscopic output: dose area product, the total cumulative air kerma at the reference point, and the air kerma rate at the reference point. If the user selects the dose-area-product method, a text box will be available to input the DAP in units of mGy cm<sup>2</sup> (be careful, as fluoroscopic machines may display the output in other units). If the user selects the cumulative air kerma method, a text box for entry of total air kerma at the reference point in mGy will appear, and for the air-kerma-rate method, two boxes will appear for the air kerma rate measurement at the reference point in mGy/s and the total time text in seconds.

### Tissue weighting factors

Two set of tissue weighting factors (ICRP103 and ICRP60) are available. Based on the selection, the appropriate methodology for calculating the displayed Remainder Dose and Effective Dose will be used.

When all of the parameters are set, users can click “Calculate Dose” button and the results will be immediately plotted and tabulated below the phantom images, as shown in Figure 8. Optionally, users can click “Create PDF Report” button to download dose report in PDF file format, including the exposure parameters used for the calculation, a schematic of the patient phantom and the exposure field, and the listing of the organ dose results.

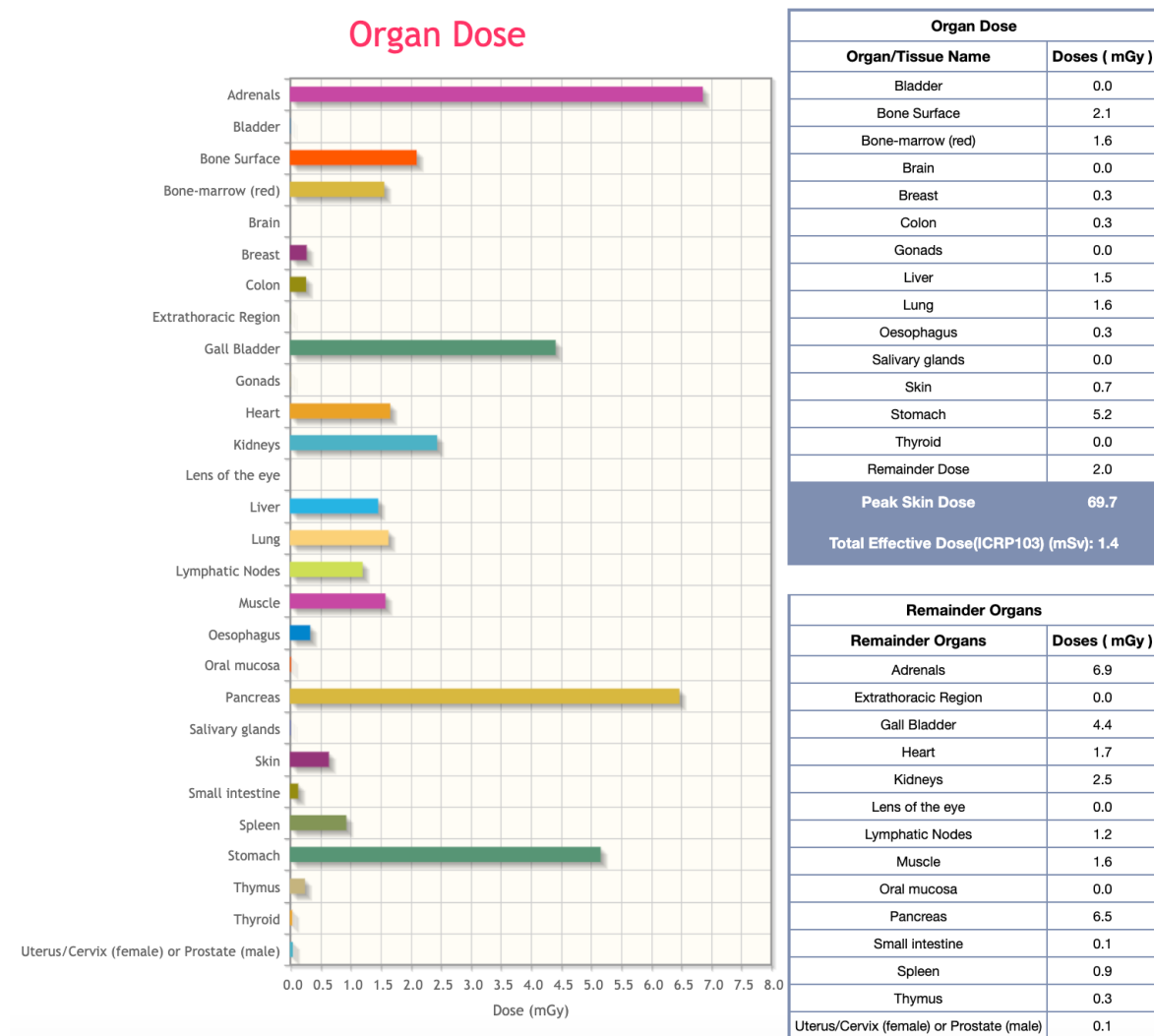
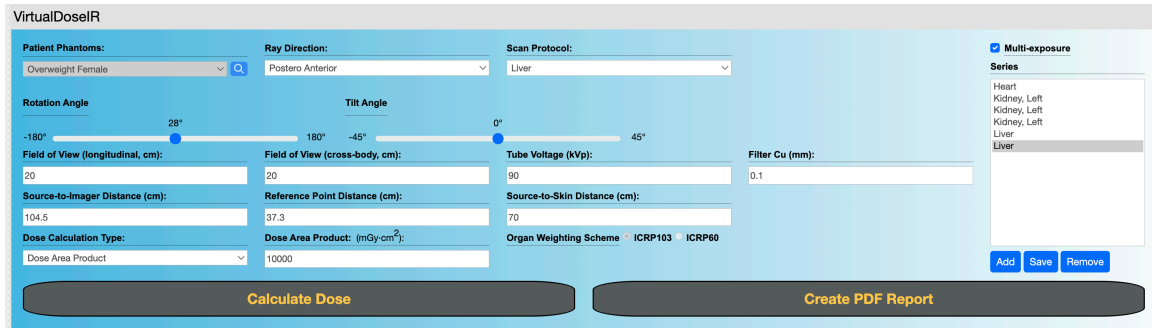


Figure 8. Plotted and tabulated dose results after use click the “Calculate Dose” button

## Multiple Exposure Series Entry

Selecting the checkbox in the upper right corner of the data entry panel marked “multi-exposure” opens up a list box where multiple individual exposure events can be saved so that the patient dose summed across all of the events can be calculated at once, as shown in Figure 9.



The screenshot shows the VirtualDoseIR interface. At the top, there are dropdown menus for Patient Phantoms (Overweight Female), Ray Direction (Postero Anterior), and Scan Protocol (Liver). Below these are sliders for Rotation Angle (set to 28°) and Tilt Angle (set to 0°). There are several input fields for parameters: Field of View (longitudinal, cm) = 20, Field of View (cross-body, cm) = 20, Source-to-imager Distance (cm) = 104.5, Reference Point Distance (cm) = 37.3, Tube Voltage (kVp) = 90, Source-to-Skin Distance (cm) = 70, and Filter Cu (mm) = 0.1. There are also dropdowns for Dose Calculation Type (Dose Area Product) and Organ Weighting Scheme (ICRP103, ICRP60). At the bottom, there are two large buttons: 'Calculate Dose' and 'Create PDF Report'. On the right side, there is a 'Multi-exposure' checkbox which is checked, and a list box containing several organ series: Heart, Kidney, Left, Kidney, Left, Kidney, Left, Liver, and Liver. Below the list box are 'Add', 'Save', and 'Remove' buttons.

Figure 9. Data entry panel showing the “Multi-exposure” box with several individual exposure events listed.

Clicking the “Add” button will create a line (marked with the field target) that holds all of the exposure parameters. Each time the button is selected, a new line will be generated.

Once one or more lines appear in the box, clicking on the line will return the exposure parameters to the values stored in that line. If the parameters are modified, clicking the “Save” button will update the values stored in that line. Clicking “Remove” will remove that line from the calculation.

When the desired lines are saved in the multi-exposure box, clicking “Calculate Dose” or “Create PDF Report” will provide the results for the aggregate of all of the exposure events.

## 5. VirtualDoseDX Software Tool

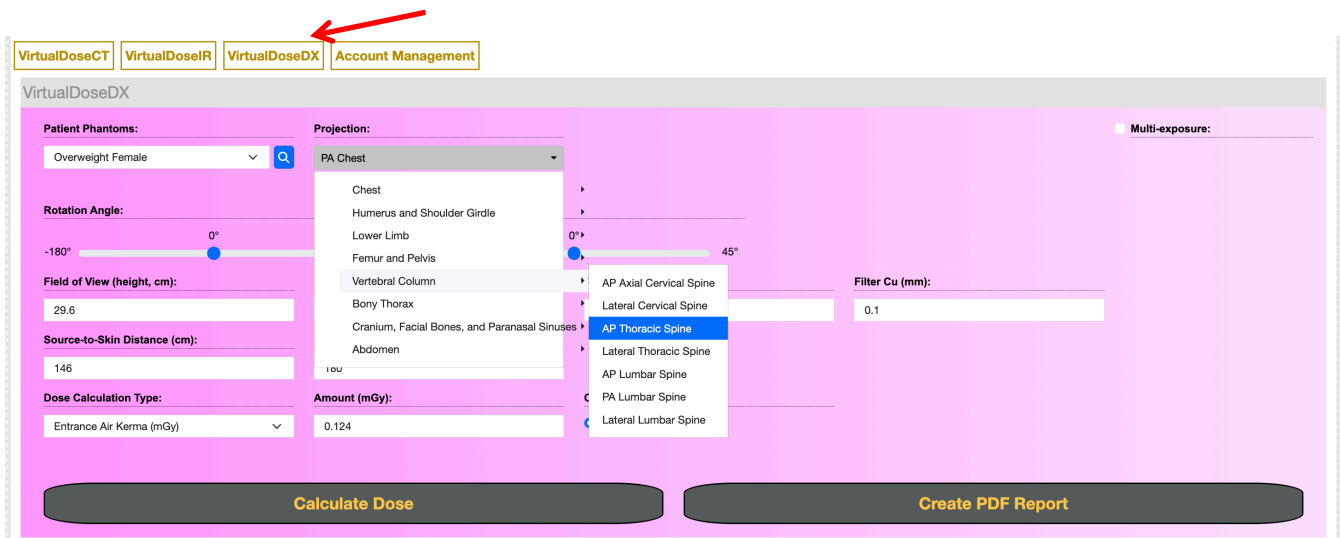



Figure 10. VirtualDose-DX™ Software Tool User Interface

There are several input parameters that are entered from the main interface to describe the x-ray exposure. The main components of the user interface include:

- 1) Virtual Patient Selection
- 2) X-ray projection
- 3) Ray direction specified by rotation angle and tilt angle selected using sliders
- 4) Beam position selection (appears after patient is selected)
  - a. Anatomical markers selected from “Scan Protocol” dropdown
  - b. Manual selection on the phantom image
- 5) Field height (superior/inferior) and width (left/right or front/back)
- 6) Tube Voltage
- 7) Cu Filter thickness
- 8) Source to Skin distance
- 9) Source to Imager distance
- 10) Dose Calculation Type List
- 11) Dose quantity
- 12) Organ Weighting Scheme

### *Virtual patient*

The user must first select a “virtual patient” first from the “Patient Phantoms” dropdown list, as shown in Figure 10. VirtualDoseDX has 21 virtual patients in total, including 50th percentile adults named RPI-Adult-Male (RPI-AM) and RPI-

Adult-Female (RPI-AF), pediatric patients of both male and female at different ages (5-, 10-, and 15-year-old), pregnant females at three gestational stages (3-, 6-, and 9month), and a set of obese male and female patients (normal-weight, over-weight, obese level-I, obese level-II, and morbidly obese, as defined by WHO guidelines). The phantom can be selected directly from the “Patient Phantoms” dropdown list or by entering patient biometric information. Clicking the magnifying glass  will reveal inputs for patient age, sex, height, and weight.

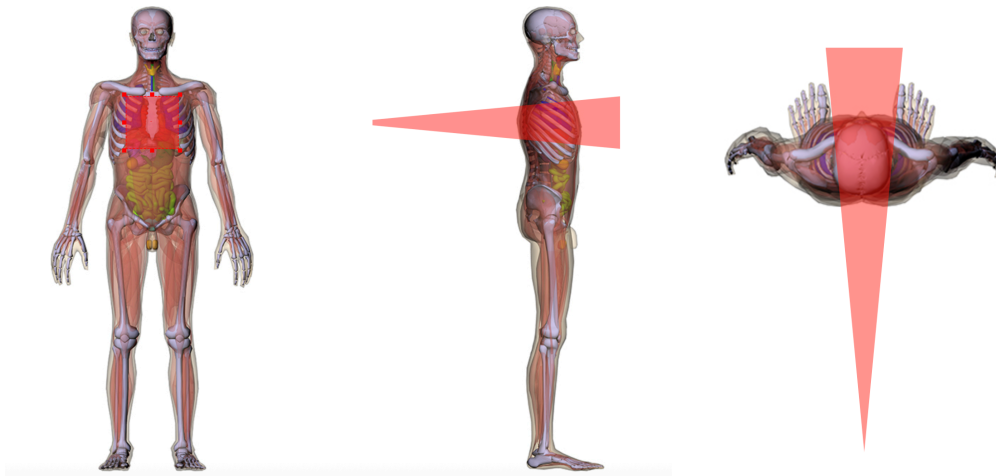


Figure 11. “Virtual Patient” as shown within the browser

### *Projection*

The Projection dropdown box is populated with a number of standard x-ray examinations, grouped into categories. Selecting the down arrow reveals the categories, and the right arrow beside each category reveals the available examinations within that category. Selecting one of the options populates the values of the rest of the parameters (listed below), which can then be modified, if necessary.

### *Ray direction*

The angle of the x-ray beam relative to the “Virtual Patient” can be adjusted manually using the sliders for the rotational angle and tilt angle. For the rotation angle, 0 degrees corresponds to the posterior-anterior direction. As the projection is updated, a representation will be displayed on the “Virtual Patient” in red color on front, side, and top projections of the patient as shown on Figure 11.

### *Beam Position and Field of View selection*

The position of the x-ray field on the “Virtual Patient” can be adjusted by click-and-drag, or position and size can be adjusted by grabbing the handles at the edges of the field. Note that the dimensions represent the size of the field at the image receptor.

### *Tube Voltage & Filter Cu*

Tube Voltage and Cu filter thickness are entered in the entry boxes on the screen. The acceptable ranges for these values are 55-120 kVp and 0-0.3 mm Cu (entries outside those ranges will be set to maximum or minimum). Users should note that in addition to the copper filtration, there is a 3.5mm Al filter that is an inherent filter applied to all X-ray tubes and is not selectable by the user.

### *Reference Distances*

Two reference distances are specified: the source-to-imager distance and the source-to-skin distance.

### *Dose Calculation Type and Value*

There are five options for specifying the output of the x-ray tube:

- EAK: Entrance air kerma (in mGy), the measure of the total air kerma at the patient surface closest to the x-ray source.
- ESE: Entrance skin exposure (in R), the measure of the total exposure at the patient surface closest to the x-ray source.
- KAP: Kerma area product (in mGy cm<sup>2</sup>), the product of the total air kerma and the beam cross-sectional area (invariant with distance from the x-ray source).
- EAP: Exposure area product (in R cm<sup>2</sup>), the product of the total exposure and the beam cross-sectional area (invariant with distance from the x-ray source).
- mAs: X-ray integrated current (in mAs). This uses the x-ray current to estimate the exposure value as a function of the kVp of the system (this will provide an estimate of the output of a typical machine, but may differ from the output of a particular device).

If you change the selection from the dropdown menu, the Value field will update to the equivalent value in the new unit.

### *Tissue weighting factors*

Two set of tissue weighting factors (ICRP103 and ICRP60) are available. Based on the selection, the appropriate methodology for calculating the displayed Remainder Dose and Effective Dose will be used.

When all of the parameters are set, users can click “Calculate Dose” button and the results will be immediately plotted and tabulated below the phantom images, as shown in Figure 12. Optionally, users can click “Create PDF Report” button to download dose report in PDF file format, including the exposure parameters used for the calculation, a schematic of the patient phantom and the exposure field, and the listing of the organ dose results.

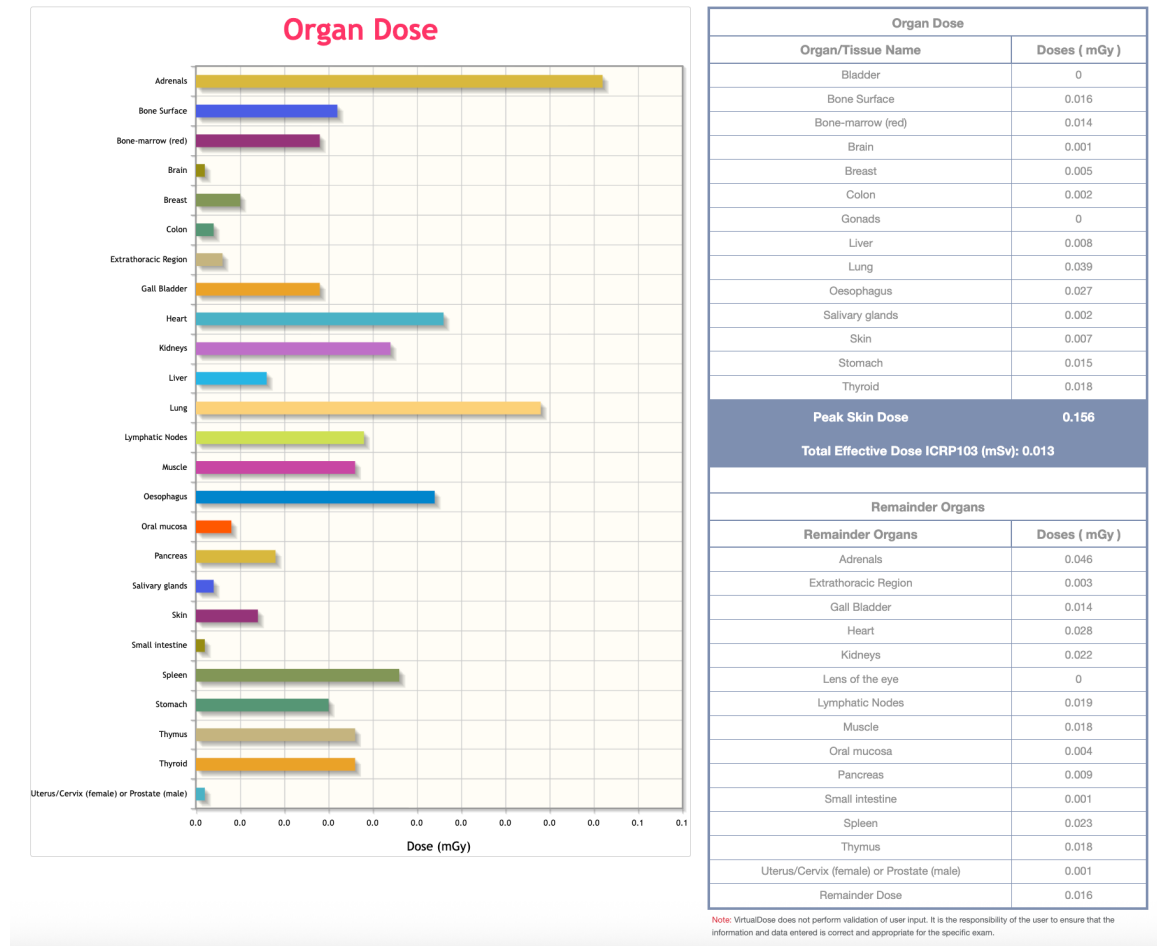


Figure 12. Plotted and tabulated dose results after use click the “Calculate Dose” button

### Multiple Exposure Series Entry

Selecting the checkbox in the upper right corner of the data entry panel marked “multi-exposure” opens up a list box where multiple individual exposure events can be saved so that the patient dose summed across all of the events can be calculated at once, as shown in Figure 13.

Figure 13. Data entry panel showing the “Multi-exposure” box with several individual exposure events listed.

Clicking the “Add” button will create a line (marked with the projection and x-ray output value) that holds all of the exposure parameters. Each time the button is selected, a new line will be generated.

Once one or more lines appear in the box, clicking on the line will return the exposure parameters to the values stored in that line. If the parameters are modified, clicking the “Save” button will update the values stored in that line. Clicking “Remove” will remove that line from the calculation.

When the desired lines are saved in the multi-exposure box, clicking “Calculate Dose” or “Create PDF Report” will provide the results for the aggregate of all of the exposure events.

## 6. User account management

The top-right menu bar provides several account management functions, shown in Figure 14:

- “My account” to view most of the account attributes (except for the user password)
- “Settings” which allows the user to edit the Organization, Email and Telephone on record
- “Reset password” to update the user Password

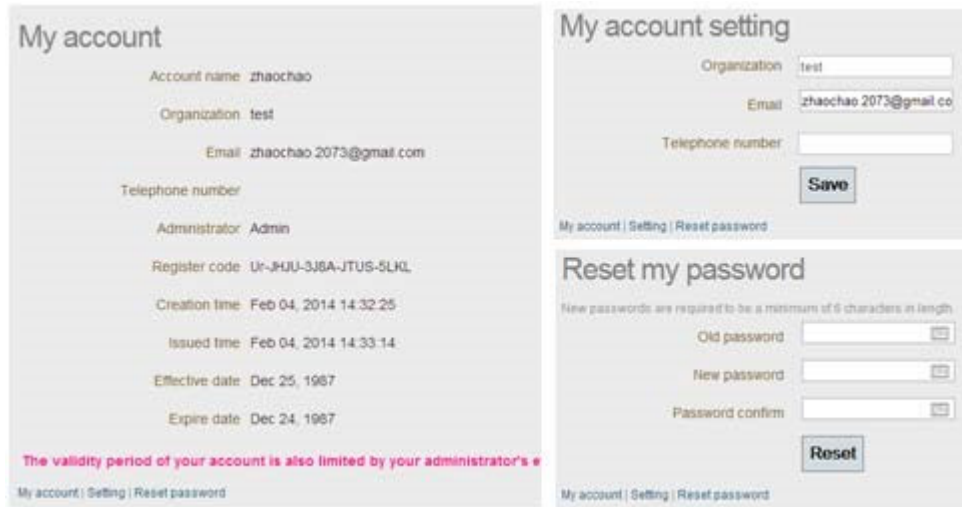


Figure 14. Screen capture of **User** account self-management

## 7. Batch Processing Utility

Subscribers to VirtualDose at a sufficient level may download and use a utility to process multiple cases in a batch calculation by formatting the input in an Excel document. Information on the Batch Utility can be found from a link in the top right menu bar.

## 8. References

More information on the VirtualDose system modules can be found in our reference publications:

Ding A, Gao Y, Liu H, Caracappa PF, Long DJ, Bolch WE, Liu B, Xu XG. VirtualDose: a software for reporting organ doses from CT for adult and pediatric patients. *Phys Med Biol.* 2015 Jul 21; 60(14):5601-5625.

Huo W, Pi Y, Feng M, Qi Y, Gao Y, Caracappa PF, Chen Z, Xu XG. VirtualDose-IR: a cloud-based software for reporting organ doses in interventional radiology. *Phys Med Biol.* 2019 Apr 26; 64(9): 095012.

<https://doi.org/10.1088/1361-6560/ab0bd5>