



Mammography

A mammogram is an x-ray examination where images of the breasts are taken. Low-dose radiation is used during the exam. The key role of mammography is to identify breast cancer early when it is very small. This is often a year or two before a lump is large enough to be felt.

A **screening mammogram** is used to help find breast cancer in patients who have no symptoms. A **diagnostic mammogram** is done as a problem-solving examination in patients who have abnormal physical findings or an abnormal screening mammogram.

Mammography is the best screening exam available today. About 1 in 10 cancers **will not** be identified by mammogram. Some cancers are not detected until they are felt as lumps. Breast self-examinations and regular exams by your healthcare provider remain an important part of breast cancer detection.

How to Prepare

Dress comfortably

- Usually, a two-piece outfit is best.
- You will be asked to undress “from the waist up”.

Do not wear any types of powders, lotions, or perfumes,

- These may show up on your images resulting in errors with the reading.

Your mammogram should be scheduled directly after your period. This is especially important if you have breast tenderness during your period.

If you have breast implants, use a walker or have any other special needs, it is important to notify the team upon scheduling your examination, as more time is required to perform the examination.

What to Expect During the Procedure

The entire examination will take **approximately** 15 to 30 minutes.

The technologist will obtain some historical information from you. This information will be used to help determine your breast cancer risk.

Two views of each breast are taken during the exam (usually).

During the exam your breast will be placed on a platform and pressed firmly between a plexiglass paddle and the platform.

Most women say compression is uncomfortable, not painful, but tolerable. This uncomfortable feeling will only last a few seconds per position.

After the Exam

The images are reviewed and interpreted by a physician called a radiologist. A report will be sent to your healthcare provider. Your physician will review your results with you. You will also receive your results in the mail from our Mammography Department.