



Mammography

What Is A Mammogram?



A mammogram is an x-ray picture of your breasts. By looking at the x-ray picture, a doctor can see anything unusual in the breast that is too small to be felt by touch.

A mammogram is one of the most important things a woman can do to protect herself from breast cancer.

How Often Should I Have A Mammogram Done?

- » The American Cancer Society (ACS) recommends women who are 40 years or older have a mammogram done every year, and should continue to do so for as long as you are in a good health.
- » If you are having breast complaints (*for example, pain, a lump, or fluid coming out of the nipple*), contact your doctor immediately for an appointment and ask if a mammogram is needed.

How Can I Prepare Myself Before My Mammogram Exam?

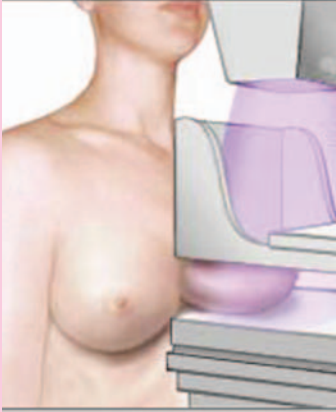


- » Talk to your doctor about any changes or problems you have experienced with your breasts.
- » Tell your doctor about any family or personal history of breast cancer, prior surgeries, or hormone use.
- » Don't schedule an appointment for a mammogram on a day when your breasts are tender because of your period. The best time would be one week after your period ends or when your breasts are not tender.

What Should I Do On The Day Of My Exam?

- » Do not wear deodorant, baby powder, or lotion under your arms on the day of the exam. This can interfere with the results of the mammogram.
- » If you have any previous mammogram pictures, bring them to the exam to give to your radiologist.
- » Describe any unusual breast problems to the person taking x-ray before the exam begins.
- » Ask when your results will be available.

What Will Happen To Me During The Exam?



- » You will be asked to undress from the waist up and put on a gown.
 - » Depending on the type of machine, you will have to either sit or stand.
 - » One breast at a time is rested on a flat surface that contains the x-ray plate. A device will be pressed gently against the breast to flatten it slightly. This helps to improve the x-ray image.
- » X-ray pictures are then taken from various different angles. You may have to hold your breath while the picture is being taken.

What Will I Feel During The Procedure?

- » You will feel pressure on the breast as it is being squeezed. If the pressure becomes a great discomfort, inform the person doing the test during the exam.
- » Some women with sensitive breasts may also experience discomfort. If this is the case, schedule the procedure when your breasts are least tender, for example, after your menstrual cycle.

Are There Any Harmful Risks?

The level of radiation is low, and any risk from the x-ray is very low. If you are pregnant, tell the person doing the test your abdominal region will be shielded by a lead apron.

Is A Mammogram Expensive?

The average cost of a mammogram ranges from \$150 to \$350, depending on the kind of mammogram you get and where you get it. Many insurance plans including Medicare, Medicaid cover some or all of the cost of mammograms.

The Charles B.Wang Community Health Center offers affordable mammograms screening to low income women who are 40 years old or older and do not have health insurance. For more information, please call us at (212) 966-0228.

What Happens If Something Is Detected In My Mammogram Or By My Doctor?

Your doctor may recommend the following procedures:

- 1 **Diagnostic mammograms** are first used to investigate the abnormality and usually involves additional x-rays of the breast.
- 2 **Magnetic resonance imaging (MRI)** can also be used to further examine any breast problems. MRI uses a magnet linked to a computer to create detailed pictures of areas inside the breast. However, MRI is a relatively new procedure and is less commonly used.
- 3 If a lump is found, **breast ultrasound** is a non-surgical method that determines whether the lump is a fluid-filled or a solid mass. A fluid-filled lump is called a cyst and is not cancerous.



- 4 If the lump is a solid mass, a **breast biopsy** is used to determine whether or not the solid mass is cancerous. A biopsy uses a needle to remove a small amount of tissue from the breast.

Be sure to make a follow-up appointment with your doctor to discuss your results. Treatment of breast cancer that is detected and diagnosed early can significantly decrease the chance of death from breast cancer.



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