



Preventive Health Care

Screening for Breast Cancer – Your Mammogram

Why get a mammogram?

- ✚ **All women between the ages of 50 and 74 should have a mammogram once every two years.**
- ✚ If you get a lump in your breast, it may be breast cancer.
 - Cancer is when cells in the breast grow in an unhealthy way.
 - Lumps can also be cysts that are not cancer and aren't harmful.
- ✚ A mammogram is a test to find breast cancer early. The earlier breast cancer is found, the easier it is to treat.
- ✚ Breast cancer is a serious disease. If you have it you must get treatment. The earlier you get it, the easier it is to treat.
 - A mammogram can save your life.
- ✚ If you have had a sister or mother who has had breast cancer, you may have a greater chance of getting breast cancer.
- ✚ Talk to your doctor about your chance of getting breast cancer.

What is a mammogram for?

- ✚ A mammogram is an X-ray that takes a picture of your breasts.
- ✚ The doctor looks at the picture to see if there are lumps or other changes in your breast.
- ✚ The earlier breast cancer is found, the easier it is to treat.

When and where do I get a mammogram?

- ✚ The mammogram is not done in the primary care doctor's office.
- ✚ Your doctor will send you to a specially trained X-ray technician.
- ✚ Make an appointment for the mammogram.

What can I do to prepare?

- ✚ On the day of the mammogram do not wear deodorant under your arms. Do not wear lotion or powders on your breasts. These could make the X-ray picture of your breasts blurry.
- ✚ Wearing a sweater or blouse to the test will make it easier to get ready.
- ✚ Make sure you can take off any jewelry easily.
- ✚ It is OK to eat and take medications before the mammogram.



What happens during the test?

- ✚ The X-ray technician will do everything they can to help you feel comfortable. Try to relax.
- ✚ When you arrive for the mammogram you will be asked
 - When and where you had your last mammogram
 - If anyone in your family has had breast cancer
 - If you are pregnant.
- ✚ You go into a changing room to take your top and bra off for the X-ray. You may be asked to take off jewelry as well.
- ✚ You will be given a gown to wear. The gown opens in the front.
- ✚ The technician uses a large X-ray machine to do the mammogram.
- ✚ The technician will talk you through the mammogram. Don't be afraid to ask questions. The technician will help you understand what is happening – step by step.
- ✚ Before you go to the appointment, you may want to watch a video of a mammogram. Go to <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vRIOOTkz9jc> to see what will happen during the test.

Will it be painful?

- ✚ The X-ray machine squeezes and flattens the breast. This is necessary to get a good picture of your breast. When your breast is being squeezed, it may hurt a little, but only for a few seconds.

Do I need to have someone go with me?

- ✚ It is a good idea to have your supporter or another woman go with you. She may be able to help explain what will happen. She may also be able to help you with any follow-up things you may be asked to do.
- ✚ Tell the X-ray technician if there is a way to help you to feel more relaxed.

When and from whom will I get my results?

- ✚ The results of the test will usually be mailed to you within a week or two. If you don't hear anything within two weeks, call the doctor.
- ✚ Make sure you understand what is said. Most women get a letter that says "...your test shows no sign of breast cancer." That means everything is OK!
- ✚ You may get a letter that says you should get more tests. That does not mean you have cancer. It means the doctor wants to do another test to make sure you are OK.
- ✚ Talk to the doctor to get more information about next steps. Again, don't be afraid to ask questions. This is about your health!