

PREPARING FOR YOUR MAMMOGRAM

A mammogram is a low-dose, digital X-ray of the breast tissue using computer-aided detection (CAD) to help radiologists identify abnormalities in breast tissue. A mammogram can be used for screening purposes to look for changes in the breast tissue of a woman who isn't experiencing any symptoms. If symptoms are present such as a lump or pain, a mammogram can also be used for diagnostic purposes.

The age to start screening for breast cancer depends upon your individual risk factors. Talk to your doctor to evaluate your breast cancer risk to decide when you should begin getting mammograms.

What to Know Before Your Exam

- Typically a mammogram will take approximately 20 minutes.
- Don't use deodorant, lotion, perfume, or powder on the day of your exam.
- Wear a two-piece outfit, as you will be asked to remove clothing and jewelry from the waist up.
- The results of your mammogram will be available within 24-72 hours.
- Please do not bring children under age 12 to your appointment.

During Your Exam

- For the procedure itself, you will be asked to stand in front of an X-ray machine specially designed for mammography. The technologist places one of your breasts on a platform and raises or lowers the platform to match your height. The technologist helps you position your head, arms, and torso to allow an unobstructed view of your breast.
- Your breast is gradually pressed against the platform by a clear plastic plate. Pressure is applied for a few seconds to spread out the breast tissue. The pressure isn't harmful, but you may find it uncomfortable or even painful. If you have too much discomfort, tell the technologist.

- Your breast must be compressed to even out its thickness and permit the X-rays to penetrate the breast tissue. The pressure also holds your breast still to decrease blurring from movement and minimizes the dose of radiation needed. During the brief X-ray exposure, you'll be asked to stand still and hold your breath.
- You can expect your mammogram appointment to take approximately 20 minutes from start to finish.

After Your Exam

- The results of your mammogram will be available within 24-72 hours. Your ordering physician may contact you with the results. If you do not receive results from your physician, please call us at 860-480-1981.
- A radiologist may request additional imaging or an ultrasound to get a closer look at a particular area of the breast. This is most often done to clarify overlying normal breast tissue or to enlarge areas of calcification. If further study is needed, you will receive a letter in the mail.