

Mammogram – What to Expect

A mammography is an X-ray exam of your breast tissue. The image it makes is called a mammogram. A mammogram can help find problems with your breasts, such as cysts, benign lumps or, cancer. Mammography is the best breast cancer screening tool available.

Be proactive

Have a screening mammogram and professional breast exams as often as your health care provider advises. Also, be sure you know how your breasts normally look and feel. This makes it easier to notice any changes. Report changes to your health care provider as soon as possible.

How do I get ready for a mammogram?

- Schedule the test for one week after your period. Your breasts are less sore and dense then. If you no longer get your period, schedule the test at your convenience.
- Make sure your clinic gets images of your last mammogram if it was done somewhere else. This lets the provider compare the two sets of images for any changes.
- On the morning of your test, don't use deodorant, powder or perfume.
- Wear a top that you can take off easily.
- If you have a history of experiencing pain during a mammogram, speak with your doctor about taking Acetaminophen one (1) hour before the mammogram is to take place.

What happens during a mammogram?

- You will need to undress from the waist up.
- The technologist will position your breast to get the best test results.
- Each of your breasts will be compressed one at a time. This helps get the most complete X-ray image.
- Your breasts will be repositioned to get at least two separate views of each breast.

What happens after a mammogram?

- More X-rays or an ultrasound are sometimes needed. If not done at the time of your initial mammogram, you'll be called to schedule them.
- You should get your test results in writing. Ask about this at your appointment.

Tell your provider if:

- You're pregnant or think you may be pregnant;
- You have breast implants;
- You have any scars or moles on or near your breasts;
- You've had a breast biopsy or surgery;
- You're breastfeeding;
- You feel a lump or mass;
- You have a family history of breast cancer.