

Mammography Today

Early detection of breast cancer saves lives. Mammography is still the best tool available. All women age 40 and older should have a mammogram every 1-2 years.

What is a mammogram, and why should I have one?

- A mammogram is a safe, low-dose x-ray of the breast.
- It is the best way to detect breast cancer early and save your life.
- Although mammograms are very effective, they cannot detect all problems.
- If you notice a change in your breast such as a lump, a thickening, or a discharge from the nipple, call your doctor or clinic right away.

How can I be sure I'm getting a high quality mammogram?

- The Mammography Quality Standards Act (MQSA) is a federal law that makes sure every mammography site meets quality standards.
- MQSA under the FDA checks both the professionals and the equipment they use.

What about my results?

- Your results should be mailed to you in 30 days.
- If you don't receive them in 30 days, call the mammography facility to ask for them.
- If you want a second opinion or if you change doctors, you are entitled by law to your original mammograms.

What if I have a serious concern about my exam or facility?

- Talk with the facility staff person responsible for addressing concerns.
- If your concern is serious and the facility can't resolve it, ask for the name, address, and phone number, of the contact person at your facility's accreditation body.
- If the accreditation body doesn't resolve your concern call FDA at 1-800-838-7715.

What if I have breast implants?

- Implants can hide breast tissue and make it more difficult to detect problems.
- When you make your appointment, make sure to say that you have breast implants because you will need a technologist trained in x-raying patients with implants.

To learn more:

National Cancer Institute's Cancer Information Service: 1-800-422-6237

TTY users: 1-800-332-8615

FDA's mammography website: www.fda.gov/cdrh/mammography

FDA's Office of Women's Health website: www.fda.gov/womens/default.htm

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Be informed! Get involved!

Be sure that you...

- Look for the FDA certificate at your facility and check its expiration date.
- Tell facility staff if you have breast implants when scheduling your appointment.
- Make sure you receive your mammogram results.
- Tell your facility about your concerns.
- When needed, obtain original mammograms.

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