

# About Your Mammogram



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## What is a mammogram?

A mammogram is an X-ray of the breast. It is used to help find lumps in the breast. If there is cancer in the breast, it is usually found by the mammogram, but not always. Health care providers usually want you to have your first mammogram starting when you are 40 years old, and one every year after that. Each woman should follow the advice of her health care provider.

It is important that you check your breasts at home, **every month**. When you have your mammogram, ask the technologist for a handout that show you how to check your breasts the right way.



If you have any questions, be sure to ask the person doing your mammogram. That person will be happy to answer (or find the answer to) your questions.

## How should I get ready for my mammogram?

On the day of your mammogram:

### At home:

- Wash your breasts and armpits well. This helps to get rid of all deodorant and powder. After washing, do **not** put on any deodorant or powder until after your test.
- Eat and drink as you usually do. You may take your medicines as usual.
- If you are diabetic and take insulin, make sure you eat before coming for your test.

If you cannot keep your appointment, call before the appointment time to let them know that you cannot come, and to schedule another appointment.



### At the hospital:

- If you are having your **yearly screening exam**, register on the first floor in the clinic lobby registration area. Bring a photo ID and have your medical record number with you.
- If you are having a **follow-up diagnostic exam**, register in the Radiology Department on the Ground Floor. Bring a photo ID and have your medical record number with you.

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## How will my test be done?

- You will need to undress from the waist up and put on a hospital gown.
- When you are ready, the technologist doing your mammogram will put your breast on the mammogram machine, and press firmly on your breast with a piece of plastic called a compression paddle. This will make your breast flatter so that the machine can X-ray all parts of your breast. This may not be comfortable for you. If you have very tender breasts, you may find this a little bit painful.
- Both breasts will be X-rayed.  
Each breast will be X-rayed from above and from the side.
- The mammogram will last about 15 to 30 minutes from the time you come to the mammogram room. After the test, you can go home, or to any other appointments you may have.



## Are there any special instructions I should follow?

- No. After your mammogram you can go back to your usual activities.

## How will I find out the results of my test?



If you are in the hospital, the health care provider who ordered your test will tell you about your test results when they are ready. If you are a clinic patient your health care provider will tell you about your results at your next clinic appointment. Be sure to keep this important appointment. If you do not have a follow-up clinic appointment, call and schedule one with your health care provider.