

MAMMOGRAPHY FAQ's



What is the difference between a screening & diagnostic mammogram?

Screening Mammogram – is done annually and looks for signs of abnormality.

Diagnostic Mammogram – is used to evaluate a specific area of concern and will be immediately reviewed by the radiologist while you are still at the office if you are called back for additional views or currently have a specific breast problem.

When will I know my results?

A Radiologist will read your mammogram later on the same day. The reports are available the next day. If your mammogram requires additional imaging due to a possible change you will be called back within 2 days.

Why do you need my previous mammogram films?

It is essential for our Radiologists to have the opportunity to compare your previous mammogram images to your current images. This ensures the highest quality result. If your previous films are from another facility, we will ask you to sign a release so your previous exams can be obtained. If we do not have your previous images your final results may be delayed.

Why can't I wear deodorant?

One of the signs we are looking for in your mammogram is tiny flecks of calcium, which can be a finding of early breast cancer. Deodorants & antiperspirants contain metals which can look just like those little flecks of calcium.

Can I have a mammogram if I have breast implants? Yes.

Why do you have to compress the breasts? The compression only lasts for a few seconds. And is key to getting a quality mammogram. First, compression prevents motion which can cause blurring and obscure findings in the breast tissue. Second, compression is a key way of separating normal breast tissue which compresses easily from cancers which are stiffer and do not compress.

What does it mean if I have dense breasts?

In a mammogram image, the fibroglandular tissue appears white while other structures appear in various shades of gray to black. Dense breasts tend to have more white areas than grays to black making the images a little more challenging to interpret for our Radiologist. Due to the new 3D technology and reading software they are able to see through the layers of the white tissue which otherwise might obscure their view making it harder to interpret your exam.

Can I have a screening ultrasound instead of a mammogram?

Unfortunately, no. Mammograms and Ultrasounds image breast tissue differently. Not everything that is seen on a mammogram can be seen on an ultrasound. Mammography is the standard of care and imaging modality of choice for breast cancer screening. Other modalities are used only when there is a clinical indication.

If I have had a diagnostic or abnormal mammogram, will I always need a diagnostic mammogram?

No, occasionally the radiologist may want to follow up on an area in 6 months to watch for subtle changes. If this is the case then yes it would be a Diagnostic exam, otherwise, your exam will be a Screening as long as it has been one year and one day since your last mammogram.