

What is a Mammogram?

Mammography is a specific type of breast imaging that uses low-dose x-rays to detect cancer early before you experience symptoms, when it is most treatable.

What special instructions do I need to follow to be ready for my examination?

1. If you are unable to keep your appointment, please let us know as soon as possible.
2. Please refrain from wearing perfume or other scented products on the day of your study.
3. Please arrive 15 minutes prior to your appointment & check in at Patient Registration.
4. The day of your examination, do not use powder, cream or deodorant on your underarms or on your breasts due to the residue that can show up in the images taken.
5. To minimize discomfort to your breast, decrease or eliminate caffeine 72 hours prior to your appointment. You may find that taking an over-the-counter pain reliever such as Tylenol or Advil is helpful if you have found mammography to be uncomfortable before.

If you are premenopausal, book your routine appointment within two weeks following your menstrual cycle.

6. If there is any possibility you might be pregnant, please inform your Health Care Provider before the procedure, as the procedure may have to be postponed, cancelled, or investigated in another way.

Who will perform my examination?

This examination will be performed by a female technologist with special training in breast imaging.

What happens to me during my examination?

Prior to your mammogram, you will be asked to complete a short questionnaire about your breast health and family history. The technologist will then take you to the change room and ask you to remove clothing from above the waist as well as neck jewellery, and put on a gown. A minimum of two different views of each breast will be taken. (You may be sitting or standing for these views). Your breast will be compressed by a plastic paddle for each picture. While this is expected to be uncomfortable, please inform the technologist if it is truly painful. In total, you can expect your examination to take 15-20 minutes.

The Radiologist will review these initial images, requesting additional views as required. This is normal practice and does not suggest the presence of a breast problem. If additional views are required, you will be contacted directly at home by our department and a follow-up appointment will be scheduled. You could also be called back for an ultrasound of the breast.

Should I expect any after effects as a result of my examination?

Although compression does not damage the breast tissue, you may have some temporary redness and mild discomfort in your breasts. Taking an over-the-counter pain reliever is adequate to relieve this. A cold compress may also be helpful.

When and how will I know the results?

Your Health Care Provider will usually have a written report from the radiologist within one week of your examination. You should obtain the results from your own Health Care Provider. If there is any urgency, your Health Care Provider is more than welcome to contact the Diagnostic Imaging Department by telephone.

If you have any questions or concerns that have not been answered here, please feel free to ask the Diagnostic Imaging staff involved in your examination.