

What to know about getting a mammogram

Mammograms are an important part of taking care of your health.

One in eight American women will be diagnosed with breast cancer—the most common form of cancer in women.* Physicians recommend annual screening exams to detect cancer as soon as possible.

Knowing what to expect will make for a better experience for both you and your physician. With a mammography system designed with your comfort in mind, your exam can be a quick and comfortable experience.



Breast cancer is still the most common cancer in women.

However, the chances of surviving breast cancer are higher the earlier it is detected and treated. Self-examinations and regular screenings are the best way to detect changes in your anatomy.

Mammography is the most common method for detecting breast cancer and initial tumor stages. It is one of the best ways to identify breast cancer early, when it is most responsive to treatment.

What is a mammogram?

- During a mammography exam, the breast is positioned between the X-ray tube and a detector and carefully pushed down with a compression plate. The optimal amount of compression is applied to maintain the highest image quality, allowing the radiologist to detect any abnormal findings or lesions between tissue.
- Superior mammography uses wide-angle tomosynthesis to see more of your breast, helping to detect suspicious findings easier.
- A typical mammogram is a 20–30-minute procedure, from checking in to leaving the facility. The screening procedure itself tends to run about 10 minutes for most patients. A diagnostic exam can take up to 1 hour.

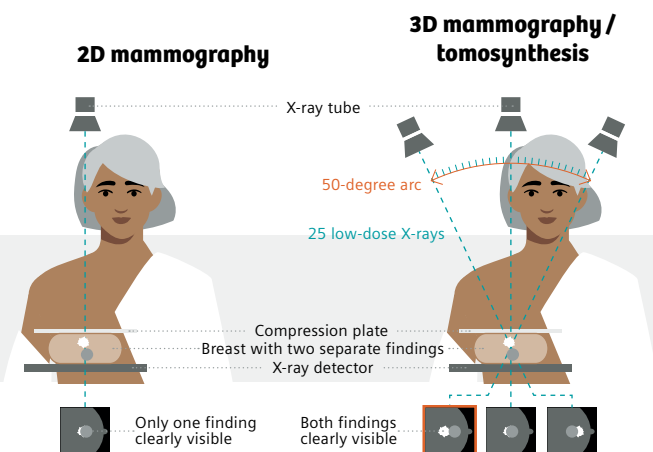
What is the difference between a screening mammogram and diagnostic mammogram?

A screening exam is performed annually and on women who present with no symptoms.

A diagnostic mammogram is performed when the woman has a problem with her breast. This includes focalized pain, lumps, nipple discharge or any other symptoms. A diagnostic exam can also be considered a call back exam for further testing.



Approximately **80%** of women who have biopsies have results that come back **benign (not cancer).****



Will it hurt?

A mammogram doesn't have to be painful. Because your provider uses a mammography system from Siemens Healthineers, you can experience:

- Customized breast compression for each patient
- Comfortable, rounded paddles that warm up quickly
- A unique imaging process so you don't need to hold your breath during exams
- Calming features to create a more comfortable exam environment

What can I do to prepare for a mammogram?

- Schedule your mammogram for when your breasts aren't likely to be tender or swollen, to help reduce discomfort and get good images. Avoid the week before your period if possible.
- On the day of the exam, don't apply deodorant, antiperspirant, powders, lotions, creams, or perfumes under your arms or under your breasts. These can affect the imaging results.
- Instead of a dress, you might find it easier to wear a skirt or pants, so that you'll only need to remove your top and bra for the mammogram.

What does 'dense breast' mean?

Knowing your breast density is essential to your breast health. Your breasts are made up of several types of tissue – fibrous, glandular, and fatty. Dense breasts have a lot of fibrous or glandular tissue but not much fatty tissue. Some women have denser breast tissue than others. Though having dense breasts is normal, dense breast tissue is linked to greater risk of breast cancer and makes it more difficult to spot abnormal findings.

Often, women with dense breasts may need additional imaging or diagnostic exam. An ultrasound scan is often performed in addition to the mammogram for women with dense breast tissue. This radiation-free method is often ideal to clarify breast pain or other suspicious symptoms. Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) is an examination for women who may need additional screening after a mammogram, with significant breast cancer risk, and/or particularly dense breast tissue.

What if I need a biopsy?

If the radiologist sees an abnormality during the diagnostic exam, they might perform a biopsy. A breast biopsy is an outpatient procedure with minimal preparation and recovery time. During the biopsy, a small tissue sample is collected to be sent to pathology for testing and a diagnosis. The procedure allows the physician to more closely analyze an area of concern.

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*<https://www.cancer.org/cancer/types/breast-cancer/about/how-common-is-breast-cancer.html>
**<https://www.nationalbreastcancer.org/breast-cancer-biopsy/>