



## WHAT IS A MAMMOGRAM ?

A mammogram is an x-ray image of breast tissue. It can detect calcifications, cysts, fibroadenomata (non-cancerous breast lumps) and cancer.

## HOW DOES MAMMOGRAPHY WORK?

Breast tissue is quite dense, therefore a mammography unit is designed to increase the quality of the images without increasing the radiation. This is achieved with a paddle that compresses the breast against a platform to produce images on various angles. The images are then produced on film or created digitally and stored on a computer.

## WHAT SHOULD I EXPECT WHEN I HAVE MY MAMMOGRAM?

During mammography, a specially qualified Radiographer will position your breast in the mammography unit. Your breast will be placed on a special platform and compressed with a paddle (often made of clear Plexiglas or other plastic). The Radiographer will ask you to change positions between images. The routine views are a top-to-bottom view and an oblique (side view). The process will be repeated for the other breast if your doctor has requested a bilateral mammogram. When the examination is complete you will be asked to wait until the Radiologist determines that all the necessary images have been obtained. The examination process should take about 30 minutes.

## ARE THERE ANY RISK OR SIDE EFFECTS FROM MY MAMMOGRAM?

The risks are minimal due to the reduced amount of radiation used and the specificity of the area of examination. Safety measures are taken for technicians and patients, and strict guidelines are enforced. The effective radiation dose from a mammogram is about 0.7 mSv, about the same as a person receives from background radiation in three months. The diagnostic benefits of mammograms include early detection of breast cancer and ongoing check-ups for recurrences.

## HOW DO I PREPARE FOR MY MAMMOGRAM?

Inform your doctor of your family history of breast cancer, any hormone treatments, surgeries and the results of any prior mammograms. Obtain the images of these prior mammograms and bring them with you. Wear two piece clothing (skirt/shorts/jeans and a top), as you will be asked to remove all clothing from the waist up and to wear a gown. It is recommended that you do not schedule your mammogram for the week prior to your menstrual period, as your breasts may be tender during this time. On the day of the exam do not wear any deodorant, antiperspirant or talcum powder etc. around the breast or underarm area, these products can appear on the mammogram images.

### Things to bring along to your appointment:

- Previous films for area of clinical interest.
- Medicare or Department of Veteran Affairs card (as we Bulk Bill most eligible Medicare services).
- Referral (this is a legal requirement).

## FEES

Exact Radiology Clinics bulk bill most Medicare eligible services, but some examinations do incur a fee.

When you make your appointment, the booking staff will advise if there is a fee applicable and payment is requested on the day of your examination.