



What is a Mammogram ?

A Mammogram is an x-ray image of breast tissue. It can detect calcifications, cysts, fibroadenoma (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.

Who does my Mammogram and report?

The person who operates the equipment is a Radiographer. They are university trained and accredited with the Australian Institute of Radiography (AIR). The person who views and interprets the films is a doctor specialising in Radiology, known as a Radiologist. The Radiologist prepares a report for your Health Care Professional.

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. 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 both breasts. 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 risks or side effects from my Mammogram?

Your doctor has sent you for this test knowing that the information provided by the scan is more beneficial than the very low risk associated with it. The skill of the operator and the design of the machine ensures you receive the lowest radiation dose possible. Female patients who are pregnant or think they may be pregnant must advise the staff prior to the examination, as a mammogram scan is usually not performed during pregnancy unless it is an absolute medical necessity to do so. The risks and possible complications will be discussed with you prior to your mammogram.

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 an examination 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, anti-perspirant or talcum powder etc around the breast or underarm area as these products can appear on the mammogram images.

Things to bring along to my appointment:

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

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