

Your Mammography Guidebook



FLORIDA
HOSPITAL

Protecting Yourself from Breast Cancer

Second only to skin cancer, breast cancer is one of the most common types of cancer among women in the United States. According to the American Cancer Society, it's also the second deadliest cancer for women in the country, ranking behind lung cancer.

Fortunately, with early detection and effective treatment, breast cancer has an extraordinarily high long-term survival rate. Routine screenings continue to catch cancer early and save women's lives.

A mammogram is the most effective way to detect breast cancer at the earliest possible stage, before it can spread to other parts of the body. Self-examination is not a substitute for a mammogram, but it's important to be familiar with how your breasts normally look and feel so you can report any changes to your doctor right away.



Understanding Mammograms

A mammogram is simply a low-dose X-ray examination of the breast, and there are two types. The first type, known as a screening mammogram, is a preventive screening for women who have not experienced any abnormal breast symptoms. Screening mammograms are recommended at least every two years, starting between the ages of 40 and 50. Based on your specific risk factors, like medical history and family history, your doctor can advise when and how often you should have a screening mammogram.

The second type, a diagnostic mammogram, is for women who display symptoms that need to be investigated, such as a breast lump or nipple discharge. They may also be performed as a follow-up if your screening mammogram showed a potential problem or irregularity.

Digital Mammography

At Florida Hospital, we use the most advanced tools in digital mammography, including 3D mammography and computer-aided detection, which allows our imaging specialists to detect subtle differences between tissues, pinpointing areas of concern like cancerous tissue, benign tumors and cysts well before they can be detected by touch.

After your mammogram, a radiologist will use computer-aided detection tools to read the digital images, looking for any signs of abnormality including asymmetries, irregular areas of increased density, and clusters of small calcium deposits. These tools have substantially improved breast imaging in recent years, especially for women

with dense breast tissue. Your images can be enhanced by computer technology, stored digitally and even sent electronically between your physicians.

Self-Referred Mammogram

Many Florida Hospital locations offer self-referred screening mammograms for women age 40 and older who have not had a mammogram in the last year and who have no breast symptoms. These women can refer themselves without a physician's prescription and the results are sent directly to the patient instead of her physician. However, it's best to talk to your doctor to determine when you should start having mammograms — even if you plan on self-referring.



Myths About Mammograms

Myth 1: A mammogram takes too long.

Fact: Digital mammography is more efficient than ever. Patients typically complete a screening mammogram in less than 30 minutes. Plus, our locations offer lunchtime and evening appointments, as well as walk-in availability.

Myth 2: Mammograms cost too much.

Fact: Most insurance companies cover the full cost of a screening mammogram as it is typically considered preventive care. Special cash pay rates are available and funding is also available for mammograms and other breast services through the Florida Breast and Cervical Cancer Early Detection Program, if you do not have medical insurance or Medicaid.

Myth 3: Mammograms are painful.

Fact: Mammograms may be uncomfortable, but should not be painful. The level of discomfort you experience should be much less than in years past due to the new compression paddle design that flexes with your body, providing pressure only where needed.

Myth 4: Radiation from mammograms can cause cancer.

Fact: Mammograms are very safe. Digital mammography uses the lowest radiation dose required to produce clear and precise images. The amount of radiation is roughly equivalent to what you would experience on a cross-country flight.

Breast Health Advice

Some great ways to decrease your cancer risk and improve your overall wellness are:

- Begin an exercise program and work out at least three times per week.
- Eat a healthy diet and maintain a normal weight.
- Examine the stress in your life and try to find ways to reduce it.
- Stay connected to your support network.
- Schedule an annual physical exam.
- Report any changes in how your breasts look or feel to your doctor right away.



Your Whole Health, Your Whole Life

At Florida Hospital, we do so much more than provide treatment for health issues. Our approach to whole-person care is focused on our patients' overall well-being from early womanhood to the cherished golden years, offering a full spectrum of health services that meet your changing needs.

Your Network of Care

Our health network includes numerous providers supported by six trusted Tampa Bay area hospitals. From our medical centers of excellence to our rehabilitation and urgent care facilities, our integrated network of services delivers exceptional quality and convenience.



Contact Us

To schedule your mammogram, please call us at **813-536-1615**.

This guide is provided to the general public to disseminate health-related information. The information is not intended to be used for diagnosing or prescribing. Please talk to your doctor before undertaking any form of medical treatment and/or adopting any exercise program or dietary guidelines.

Florida Hospital is a trusted member of one of America's largest, not-for-profit health care systems.

