

# Mammography Guidebook





# 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: screening mammograms and diagnostic mammograms. A screening mammogram is a preventive screening for women who have not experienced any abnormal breast symptoms. Per The American College of Radiology and Society of Breast Imaging, women should get yearly mammogram screenings starting at age 40. 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. It may also be performed as a follow-up if your screening mammogram showed a potential problem or irregularity.

## Digital Mammography

AdventHealth uses advanced, digital mammography (including 3D mammography at our Edna Owens Breast Center at AdventHealth Gordon), 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

Women age 40 and older who haven't had a mammogram in the last year and have no breast symptoms may get a self-referred mammogram. 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, lunchtime and evening appointments may be available, 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. Depending on where you go for your screening, special cash-pay rates may be available if you do not have medical insurance or Medicaid. Women who live in Kansas can participate in the Early Detection Works (EDW) program, which funds breast and cervical cancer screenings for Kansas women.

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

## Your Network of Care

The Edna Owens Breast Center at AdventHealth Gordon provides a full range of breast-health services including diagnostic mammograms, breast biopsies under mammography, ultrasound, magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) and breast cancer care. Mammograms are also available to you at AdventHealth Murray.







## Take charge of your breast health.

If you haven't had a mammogram recently, now is the perfect time to take charge of your health. Our knowledgeable and compassionate medical team is here to help. To schedule your mammogram, call us at **800-973-5571**.

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