

Lower dose 3D MAMMOGRAPHY

Frequently Asked Questions

Now that lower dose 3D mammography is available at our facility, you may have some questions. We've prepared this short Q&A to address concerns you may have.

What is a 3D mammography (breast tomosynthesis) exam?

3D mammography is an advanced, clinically proven screening and diagnostic tool designed for early breast cancer detection.

During the 3D mammography exam, the X-ray arm sweeps in an arc over your breast, taking multiple low dose images. Then, a computer produces a 3D image of your breast tissue in one millimeter slices, providing greater visibility for your radiologist to see breast detail in a way never before possible. The radiologist can scroll through images of your entire breast like pages of a book, for clarity and insight never before possible.

The 3D images make it possible your radiologist to gain a better understanding of your breast tissue during screening, significantly improving early breast cancer detection and lowering the need for follow-up imaging by up to 40%, which can reduce unnecessary anxiety.*

Why is there a need for 3D mammography breast exams? What are the benefits?

With conventional digital mammography, the radiologist is viewing all the complexities of your breast tissue in a one flat image. Sometimes breast tissue can overlap, giving the illusion of normal breast tissue looking like an abnormal area; or, potentially hide a small cancer.

By also looking at the breast tissue in slices, the radiologist can provide a more accurate exam. Multiple clinical studies show that 3D mammography finds 40% more invasive cancer missed with conventional 2D mammography. Also, there is less chance your doctor will call you back later for a "second look," because now they can see breast tissue more clearly.*

What is the difference between a screening and diagnostic mammogram?

A screening mammogram is your annual mammogram that is done every year. Sometimes the radiologist may ask you to come back for follow-up images, called a diagnostic mammogram, to rule out an unclear area in the breast or if there is a breast complaint that needs to be evaluated.

What should I expect during the 3D mammography screening exam?

3D mammography complements standard 2D mammography and is performed at the same time with the same system. There is no additional compression required and the exam time may be just about the same or shorter than a 2D exam.

Is there more radiation dose?

Our site uses the lowest dose available for 3D mammography. Very low X-ray energy is used during the exam, just about the same as a standard 2D mammogram, and lower than a traditional film mammogram. The total patient dose is within the FDA safety standards for mammography. Your doctor will tailor the 3D exam as needed.

Who can have a 3D mammography exam?

It is approved for all women who would be undergoing a standard mammogram, in both the screening and diagnostic settings. Multiple clinical studies show that all women, regardless of breast type, benefit from 3D mammography.*

Please call 000-000-0000 to schedule your annual 3D screening mammogram appointment. For additional information, please visit



* Data on file with Hologic, Inc.


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