

Should I Have a Mammogram?



WHAT IS A MAMMOGRAM?



Mammography uses X-rays to create images of the breast. Getting a screening mammogram takes about 15 minutes. During the exam, each breast is pressed between two plates and two views of each breast are taken, one with the X-ray beam aimed from top to bottom and the other from side to side. Overall, mammography is the most effective screening tool used to find breast cancer in most women. It can detect cancers at an early stage when they are small, and the chances of survival are highest.

What are the potential benefits?

Finding breast cancer early offers the best likelihood of survival. Establishing a baseline image can be helpful for evaluating future abnormal screening mammograms.

What are the potential harms?

- You could be asked to have additional screening. Fewer than 1 in 10 women called back actually has breast cancer
- The process of getting a mammogram can be uncomfortable, and for some women scary
- Some small breast cancers will be discovered and treated, even though they may not have caused a problem if left untreated
- Exposure to a small amount of radiation during a mammogram. While radiation exposure during mammography can increase the risk of breast cancer over time, this increase in risk is minimal

What is my risk of developing breast cancer?

One in 8 women in the U.S. develops breast cancer in their lifetimes.

What factors affect your risk?

- ✓ How old you are
- ✓ How much alcohol you drink
- ✓ How much exercise you get
- ✓ If you have dense breasts
- ✓ If your first period was before you were 12
- ✓ If you are an Ashkenazi Jew
- ✓ Whether you have a family history of breast cancer
- ✓ If you have never had children, or if you had your first child after age 35

Is Mammography right for you?

- I would only want to start screening now if my risk of cancer is high
 YES NO
- I'm afraid of getting a mammogram
 YES NO
- Getting a mammogram is a hassle
 YES NO
- I'm worried about the potential harms of getting a mammogram
 YES NO
- I'm not that worried about getting cancer
 YES NO
- I'm concerned that my insurance won't cover the cost of my mammogram
 YES NO

Discuss with Your Medical Professional

Did you **agree** with most of the statements above?

Starting mammography at 40 may not be for you.

Did you **disagree** with most of the statements above?

You may want to talk to your doctor about starting screening mammography at 40.

No matter what your answers, please share them with your medical professional.

Together you can come up with the best screening schedule for you.



Questions?

Call (508) 366-1945

Learn more at KomenNewEngland.org/Mammography