

Patient Information - Mammogram

Department of Radiology – New QEII Hospital

What is a mammogram?

A mammogram is the name for an X-ray of the breast. The X-rays pass through the breast and are detected by electronic sensors which send the information to a computer. Digital images are produced which can then be viewed on a screen. Images are taken at different angles of each breast.

Are there any risks?

This procedure involves the use of ionising radiation; however, the risks are very low and are outweighed by the benefits of having this procedure.

What are the benefits?

The benefits from making a diagnosis, and consequently giving you the right treatment, outweigh any small risks involved.

Preparations prior to the procedure

- Please wash your breasts and under your arms before coming to the department. After washing, **do not** use talcum powder or deodorant as these substances can affect the images taken.
- It is advisable to wear separates, such as a skirt and top, or trousers and top as you will need to undress from the waist upwards.
- If you have long hair, please ensure that it is tied back prior to your examination.

Are there any precautions?

Please inform this department **before** you come for your examination if:

- you are, or think you may be pregnant;
- you have breast implants.

What happens during the procedure?

Once you are in the X-ray room the radiographer will ask you a few questions about your medical history and explain the procedure. Each breast will be positioned in turn on a special platform in the mammography unit and compressed by a paddle. The radiographer will go behind a screen to activate the exposure. She will be able to see and hear you at all times. The mammogram takes approximately 20 minutes.

Will it hurt?

Most people find that the pressure on the breast from the paddle is uncomfortable and some find it a little painful. This compression is important to achieve good images and will only last a few seconds. Breast tenderness can increase the discomfort.

When will I receive my results?

A consultant radiologist will study the images and send the results to your referring doctor. You will be able to discuss these results at the next appointment with your doctor.

Feedback

When you attend your hospital appointment you should be offered the Friends and Family Test survey asking you the question, **“How likely are you to recommend our service to friends and family if they needed similar care or treatment?”**. We welcome your comments about what was good about your visit and what would have made your experience better. Your feedback is anonymous and is used to help improve the services we provide to all our patients.

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