# Mammogram Tips

## How Mammograms Can Help You The Most

Healthy women should begin getting mammograms every year or two once they reach age 40, and once a year when they reach age 50. Here are tips:

- Find an experienced, high-volume center with accomplished radiologists. You can ask for their credentials.
- Ask to see the certificate showing the center is approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration.
- Use the same center regularly, so it is easier to compare your new mammograms with your old ones.
- Bring a list of places you have had mammograms, dates, biopsies or other breast treatments. Bring old mammograms with you or have them sent to your primary caregiver.
- Describe any breast problems to your caregiver or the person doing the mammogram. Be ready to give past surgeries, birth control pills, hormone use, breast implants, growths, moles, breast scars and family or personal history of breast cancer.
- Call your doctor or center to check on the mammogram if you hear nothing within 10 days. **Do not** assume everything was normal.
- To protect your privacy, the mammogram results cannot be given over the phone or to anyone but you.
- Radiation from a mammogram is very low and does not pose a radiation risk.
- Mammograms can detect breast problems other than breast cancer.
- You may be asked stand or sit in front of the X-ray machine.
- Two small plastic or glass plates are placed around the breast when taking the X-ray.
- If you are menstruating, schedule your mammogram a week after your menstrual period.
- Do not wear deodorants, powder or perfume when getting a mammogram.
- Wash your breasts and under your arms before getting a mammogram.
- Wear cloths that are easy for you to undress and dress.
- Arrive at the center at least 15 minutes before the mammogram is scheduled.
- There may be slight discomfort during the mammogram, but it goes away shortly after the test.
- Try to relax as much as possible during the mammogram.
- Talk to your caregiver if you do not understand the results of the mammogram
- Follow the recommendations of your caregiver regarding further tests and treatments if needed.

- Get a second opinion if you are concerned or question the results of the mammogram, further tests or treatment if needed.
- Continue with monthly self-breast exams and yearly caregiver exams even if the mammogram is normal.
- Your caregiver may recommend getting a mammogram before age 40 and more often if you are at high risk for developing breast cancer.

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