Mammography

A mammography is a procedure that uses x-rays to make pictures of breast tissue. Mammography is suggested to screen for breast cancer in women over 40 years of age. It will help find the cause of breast lumps. Breast cancer is the most common cause of cancer in women. If you are over 50, or have a family history of breast cancer, you are at increased risk of developing breast cancer.

Finding breast disease early by regular breast exams and mammography offers the best chance to cure breast cancer if it develops. Mammography often finds breast lumps up to two years before they can be felt by exam.

BEFORE THE TEST

- If possible do not schedule a mammogram near your menstrual period. Your breasts may be more tender than usual during this time.
- Schedule your test about 7 days after your period. This is when your breasts are the least tender.

DURING THE TEST

- Do not wear any deodorant perfume, powders, or ointment on your breasts or under your arms.
- The mammogram x-ray pictures will be looked at by a radiology specialist.
- Two smooth plastic or glass plates are placed around your breast in different positions with slight pressure and x-rays are taken from different angles of the breast. The pressure caused by flattening the breast can be uncomfortable. The same thing is done on the other breast.
- Your caregiver will be notified of the results.
- Relax as much as possible during the test. Any discomfort during the mammogram will be very brief.

RECOMMENDED SCREENING GUIDELINES FOR MAMMOGRAPHY

- By age 40 you should have had your first mammogram.
- At age 40-49 years, repeat every 1 to 2 years or as directed by your caregiver.
- Mammograms should be done yearly after 50 years of age.
- Regular physical exams and self exams are also very important to detecting early problems and should continue.
- Mammography should start at an earlier age if there is a strong family history of breast cancer, or if there are other problems that make a mammogram necessary.

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