

The Best Weapon Against Breast Cancer

All About Mammography And Breast Health

Breast cancer is a disease that is approaching epidemic proportions. One in nine American women will develop breast cancer at some time.

The best weapon against breast cancer is early detection. A mammogram is a low-dose X-ray that helps your doctor “see” breast cancer before there’s a lump, when the cure rates are near 100%. It is essential you have a mammogram on a regular basis – even if no symptoms are present.

However, a mammogram is only part of the fight against breast cancer. You should regularly examine your breasts and have a regular exam by your doctor. Find out more about Breast Self Examinations (BSE) on the back of this page.

How A Mammogram Works

Mammography is a simple procedure and usually proceeds in the following manner:

Clothing

You will be asked to remove all clothing above the waist. Do not use deodorant, powders, perfume or ointment on your breasts or underarm area before your mammogram. They leave a residue which can distort the mammogram.

Positioning

You will be placed at the

mammography X-ray machine in a standing position, depending on your abilities. Your breast will be positioned on the machine and placed between two pieces of plastic. The breast will be compressed to expose as much tissue as possible. This may cause some minor discomfort.

Procedure

Both breasts will be X-rayed from the side and from above. These X-rays produce an image of the breast that reveals lumps or abnormalities. The X-rays will then be examined by a radiologist, who reviews the results with your doctor. This will help your doctor with a diagnosis and any further recommendations or necessary treatment.

At Unity Medical Center, your mammogram will be performed by a certified X-ray technologist on a low-dose, state-of-the-art, dedicated LoRad mammography unit.

See reverse for frequently asked questions and breast self examination information.

SPECIAL NOTE

If you are pregnant or suspect you might be pregnant, or if you have allergies, it is important to let your doctor and technologist know prior to the exam.



Unity

MEDICAL CENTER

For Your Health

164 West 13th Street • Grafton, ND • unitymedcenter.com

Clinic: 352-2000 • Hospital: 352-1620



Frequently Asked Questions

Is Mammography Accurate?

Mammography is the most accurate method to detect breast disease when there are no symptoms.

Does Insurance Pay For Mammography?

Payment for mammography depends on your insurance coverage. Read your policy guidelines or contact your insurance agent. Medicare will pay for a screening mammography every 12 months.

Where Will The Mammography Exam Be Done?

The mammography exam will be done in a mobile DMS vehicle parked outside the Emergency door of Unity Hospital.

Who Will Do The Mammography Exam?

The exam will be done by a registered female mammography technician.

How Long Will The Mammography Exam Take?

The exam will take approximately 15 minutes.

How Will I Find Out The Results Of My Mammography Exam?

The radiologist, who is a physician specializing in medical diagnosis by X-ray, will study your mammogram. A report will then be given to your doctor and a notice will be mailed to you explaining the findings of your exam.

How To Perform Breast Self Examinations (BSE)

Monthly breast self-examinations (BSE) can decrease breast cancer mortality. It takes only a few minutes and costs nothing. After age 20, do BSE monthly, 7-10 days (or one week) after your period begins. After menopause, do BSE on the first day of every month.



Lying Down. Gently squeeze the nipple of each breast. Check for any discharge, clear or bloody. Report any lumps, thickening or discharges you discover during the examination to your doctor immediately.



Lying Down. With fingers flat, use left hand to press an imaginary clock face on your right breast. Check for lumps or depressions (hollows). A ridge of firm tissue in lower curve is normal. Move in an inch toward nipple and make the same circling motion again and again until you reach the center. Repeat with right hand, left breast. (Be sure to press firmly.)



Lying Down. To examine your right breast, place a pillow or folded towel under your right shoulder and lay your right hand on your forehead, elbow bent and slightly forward. This distributes breast tissue more evenly on your chest. Move your hand down, then up all around the area shown. Repeat on other side.



Before a Mirror. Now raise your arms overhead. Look for changes in the contour of each breast, as well as swelling, dimpling of the skin and changes in the nipple.



Before a Mirror. With your hands at your sides, visually check for lumps or depressions (hollows). Then, placing palms on hips, press down firmly, flex your chest muscles and check again. Don't worry if your breasts don't match – chances are they will be a little different.



In the Shower. Stand in the shower and with fingers flat (do not use the tips of your fingers), move your hand gently over every part of each breast. Check for lumps, knots or thickening. Use right hand for left breast, left hand for right breast.

How Often Should My Breasts Be Examined?

The American Cancer Society offers the following guidelines:

1. From age 20 on, perform monthly breast self-examination.
2. Physician should examine breasts at least once every three years from age 20 to 35, and every year thereafter.
3. Women ages 35-39: See your doctor for a baseline mammogram.

4. Women ages 40-49: Have a mammogram every 1 to 2 years, even if no symptoms are present.
5. Women 50 and over: See your doctor for a mammogram every year.
6. Any abnormality you find should be reported immediately to your doctor.