

## Stay Healthy: Get a Mammogram

Taking care of your health means having regular screenings – even if you don't feel sick or have any pain. This brochure answers common questions about breast health and mammogram screening important for staying healthy.

*"In the former Soviet Union, I did not trust my doctors. Can I trust the doctors here in the United States?"*

*"Catch it early...that is the best hope."*

*"I am not sure when and how often a woman should get a mammogram. Some say every month, others say every few years...I do not know."*

*"You need to take care of yourself. We do not have a culture for that...but we need to be strong and take care of ourselves."*

*"I know a woman who waited many months after she found a lump in her breast before she went to the doctor...She did not even tell her husband. When she went to the doctor, it was already too late. She died in a few months from breast cancer."*

### EARLY CANCER DETECTION CAN SAVE YOUR LIFE.

Breast Cancer detected early:

98% survival rate

Breast Cancer spread to lymph nodes:

84% survival rate

Cancer spread beyond breast:

23% survival rate

# we are survivors!



## Schedule an appointment today.

Ask your health care provider about breast, cervical and colon health screening.

You may be eligible for a no cost mammogram and gynecological services if you have limited income and no health insurance. The Breast, Cervical and Colon Health program provides:

- Clinical Breast Exam
- Mammogram Screening
- Pap test
- Colon Health screening

For more information about the program go to [www.kingcounty.gov/health/cancer](http://www.kingcounty.gov/health/cancer)

For more information about cancer contact: **American Cancer Society** at [www.cancer.org](http://www.cancer.org) or call 1-800-ACS-2345 (Russian translator available 24 hours a day - hold and request)



# Be proud. Take care of your health



# Answers to Your Questions About Mammograms

## 1. Why should I get a mammogram?

A mammogram is a type of x-ray that gives your \*health care provider a “picture” of your breast tissue. A mammogram can find tumors early when they are too small to feel by touch. In the former Soviet Union screening mammograms are less common than they are in the United States. It’s been found that regular mammogram screening after age 40 finds problems at the earliest stage when treatment is most successful.

## 2. If both my doctor and I examine my breast tissue, why do I still need to get a mammogram?

Examining your own breasts is good to do and should also be done by a provider before your mammogram. A breast lump would need to be the size of a cherry before you feel it yourself. Having a mammogram is important because it can find breast tissue that is pre-cancerous and as small as a seed. Even the best breast exam by a provider may not find the tiny areas of breast tissue that may need treatment. A mammogram can find that tiny area.

## 3. Is a mammogram dangerous?

A mammogram uses a type of radiation but is not dangerous to your health. A mammogram does not cause breast cancer. It’s not the same type of radiation released in the Chernobyl accident. A mammogram has about the same dose of radiation as what you get from a dental x-ray or from going through airport security.

## 4. I have no pain in my breast. Why should I get a mammogram?

Getting a regular mammogram is like getting a health check up for your breasts. In that way, the provider is able to “catch” any early cancer that may be quiet and silently growing. The earliest stage of breast cancer usually doesn’t cause any pain or symptoms. If you feel pain in your breasts, it’s important to talk to a provider right away and see if there’s a need for a test or other exam.

## 5. What happens if the mammogram finds something in my breast?

If a lump is found you will need to have more tests, like an ultrasound or a biopsy. If asked to come back for more tests, it does not mean a woman has breast cancer. A provider will talk to you about these tests and what they mean.

## 6. What if I am afraid to know that I have breast cancer?

Some women are afraid of getting breast cancer and do not want to know if they have it. Mammograms protect a woman’s health by finding cancer at a very early stage when it is small and the doctor is better able to successfully treat it. Regular mammograms can save a woman’s life and avoid the suffering a later stage breast cancer can cause.

## 7. How do I prepare for a mammogram?

It’s best to schedule your mammogram and breast exam a week before or after your period, when your breasts are less tender. Do not wear deodorant or powder on the day of your mammogram.

You will undress from the waist up and wear a robe with an opening in the front. You will stand in front of the machine and a technician will position your breast between two plates that will flatten it. Several pictures of each breast will be taken.

If you have pain, tell the technician so that she can make it more comfortable. If the mammogram image is not clear, more pictures may need to be taken. This does not mean you have cancer.

## 8. Will I be told the truth about my mammogram results?

Yes, you will receive a letter with the results of the mammogram. Only you and your doctor will receive these results, unless you want others to know too. Some women told us that in the former Soviet Union, their provider did not always share accurate information with them. In the U.S. the law states that patients will receive complete and accurate information about their exam and mammogram results and about the treatment options available to them if necessary.

## 9. Who should get a mammogram and how often?

Talk with your doctor about breast cancer screening. Recommended tests are:

### Mammogram

- Ages 40 - 49, every one to two years
- After age 50, every year

### Clinical Breast Exam (CBE)

- Age 20 - 39, every three years
- After age 40, every year

### Breast self-exam (BSE)

- Age 18 start doing BSE monthly  
While this is optional, regular BSE helps you know the feel of your breast.  
If you notice changes, tell your doctor.

Women with a family history of breast or ovarian cancer may need a mammogram before age 40. Follow your recommended mammogram testing schedule, so that your doctor can find any problems early.

\* A health care provider can be a doctor, a nurse practitioner or a physician assistant.