

Mammogram

Mammogram

A mammogram is a low-dose digital X-ray of your breast. It uses very little radiation to get an image of your breast tissue.

Screening mammograms have been shown to be the best way to reduce breast cancer deaths.

The exam will take about 20 minutes.

Before Your Mammogram

- Tell your health care provider if you have breast implants.
- Try to schedule your mammogram after your menstrual period. This is the time when your breasts are less likely to be swollen and tender.
- If caffeine makes your breasts sensitive or tender, do not eat or drink caffeine for a few days before the mammogram.
- If you have had mammograms at another health care facility other than Allina Health in the last 10 years, bring the images and their reports with you to your exam or have them mailed or electronically sent to the clinic before the day of your exam.

By comparing your new mammogram results to old ones, a radiologist can see if your breast tissue has changed.

- Do not wear deodorant, powder, perfume or lotion until after the mammogram.

Your Appointment

Location: _____

Date: _____

Time: _____ a.m. / p.m.

Phone number: _____

If you need to cancel or reschedule, please call at least 24 hours before your scheduled appointment.

During Your Mammogram

- A registered technologist with special training in mammography will perform the exam.
- You will be asked to remove your clothes from the waist up. You will be given a hospital gown or wrap to wear.
- You will stand or sit (if you are in a wheelchair) in front of the X-ray machine.
- The technologist will put one of your breasts on the platform. Your breast will be compressed between two panels for a few seconds so the X-ray can get a clear image of your breast tissue. You will feel pressure.
- After the exam is completed, the technologist will review the images. She may have to do the X-rays again if they do not get a clear image of your breast tissue.

(over)

After Your Mammogram

- Your breasts may feel sore. This is normal. If your breasts continue to feel sore for more than 5 days, call your health care provider.
- If your breasts feel tender, you may take acetaminophen (such as Tylenol®) or ibuprofen (such as Advil®) for 1 to 2 days. Take as directed.
- A radiologist will interpret (read) your mammogram. They will compare the new image with any past mammograms. The radiologist will send the results to you and your health care provider.

A Call Back

You may be asked to come back for more images. This means the radiologist may want a more detailed view of a specific area of the breast. A “call back” does not mean you have cancer or that the mammogram was not done correctly.

Breast Cancer Screening Schedule for Women at Average Risk for Breast Cancer

When to start having mammograms to screen for breast cancer, and how often to have them, is a personal decision. It should be based on your preferences, your values and your risk for developing breast cancer.

Allina Health recommends that you and your health care provider together determine when mammograms are right for you.

Allina Health’s mammogram screening guidelines are based on the 2015 American Cancer Society recommendations:

- **Age 25:** Have a risk assessment for breast cancer with your health care provider.
- **Ages 40 to 44:** Should consider having a mammogram every year with your decision informed by a shared decision making process with your health care provider. During this process, they will explain the benefits and harms of screening.
- **Ages 45 to 54:** Have a mammogram every year.
- **Age 55 and older:** Have a mammogram every year or transition to having one every 2 years. Continue to have mammograms as long as your health is good.

Your doctor may recommend a different schedule if you have a **higher than average risk** for breast cancer.

Whom to Call With Questions

Call your health care provider if you have questions about the exam (other than insurance coverage).

Insurance Coverage

Check with your insurance provider to see if the mammogram(s) will be covered. Your health care provider’s recommendation for services does not guarantee coverage by your insurance provider.