

Commonly Asked Questions About Having a Mammogram With Breast Implants

Can You Have a Mammogram if You Have Breast Implants?

Yes. You can have a mammogram if you have breast implants.

Mammograms can help you detect breast cancer early. Early detection means more choices for treatment if you do have cancer.

How is a Mammogram With Breast Implants Different Than a Mammogram Without Breast Implants?

During a mammogram without breast implants, at least 2 images are taken of each breast. If you have breast implants, at least 4 images of each breast will be taken during the mammogram.

The first set of images will be done to look at your breast tissue with your breast implants. This allows the radiologist to see the position of the implants and if they are still in good condition.

The second set of images are done with your breast implants moved out of the way. This allows your technologist to get clear images of your breast tissue.

Can You Have a 2-D or 3-D Mammogram if You Have Breast Implants?

Yes. You can have a 2-D (two-dimensional) mammogram or a 3-D (three-dimensional) mammogram if you have breast implants.

- A 2-D mammogram is a standard mammogram. It creates flat images of your breast.
- Three-dimensional (3-D) mammography (also known as breast tomosynthesis) creates 3-D images of your breast using low-dose digital X-rays. It has a higher rate of finding cancer and decreases your chance of having to come back for additional breast imaging.

Call your insurance provider to see if your plan covers mammograms and how much you have to pay (out of pocket). If you have little or no insurance, please call the American Cancer Society at 1-800-227-2345 to learn about free and low-cost mammograms.

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What Can You Expect During a Mammogram?

A mammogram with breast implants is similar to a mammogram without breast implants. A series of images are taken on each breast from two different angles.

- A registered technologist with special training in mammography with breast implants 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. You will feel pressure. You will have at least 2 images taken of each breast.
- The next set of images will be done in a similar way, however this time, the technologist will move your implant out of the way so that only the breast tissue is imaged. You will have at least 2 more images taken of each breast.
- After the exam is completed, the technologist will review the images. The technologist may have to do the images again if they do not get a clear image of your breast tissue.

What Are the Risks of Having a Mammogram With Breast Implants?

There is only a minimal risk your implant may rupture. This risk is very rare.

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.