

Three-dimensional (3-D) Mammography

What is Three-dimensional (3-D) Mammography?

Three-dimensional (3-D) mammography (also known as breast tomosynthesis) creates 3-D images of your breast using low-dose digital X-rays.

How is a 2-D Mammogram Different Than a 3-D Mammogram?

A 2-D (two-dimensional) mammogram is a standard mammogram. It creates flat images of your breast.

Sometimes during a 2-D mammogram, the breast tissue can overlap while it is compressed. This can make the tissue look abnormal. If you have an abnormal mammogram, you will need to have more testing done.

2-D mammograms are safe, accurate and provide reliable results.

3-D mammograms can decrease breast tissue overlap. During the exam, the camera moves in an arc over your breast taking multiple 3-D images.

How is 3-D Mammography Done?

- 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 about 10 seconds. You will feel pressure.
- The camera will move in an arc over your breast taking multiple images.
- After the exam is completed, the technologist will review the images. She may have to do the X-rays again if they do not give a clear image of your breast tissue.

What Are the Benefits?

3-D mammography:

- has a higher rate of finding cancer
- decreases your chance of having to go back for more tests, which means fewer:
 - “false-positive” results (This means that there is an abnormal area but it isn’t cancer.)
 - invasive testing procedures, such as a biopsy or surgery
- can provide more detailed images of the breast if you have dense breast tissue or breast implants.

What Are the Risks?

You will have some radiation exposure from the X-ray during the exam. However, the level of radiation exposure is safely below the American College of Radiology guidelines.

3-D mammography is approved by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

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Insurance Coverage

It is important to understand your health care benefits before your exam. Some insurance providers do not cover the cost of 3-D mammography. Please call your insurance provider to find out exactly what is and isn't covered under your plan, and how much you have to pay yourself.