

3D Mammography

Frequently Asked Questions

What is a 3D mammography (or tomosynthesis) breast exam?

3D mammography is a revolutionary new screening and diagnostic tool designed for early breast cancer detection that can be done in conjunction with a traditional 2D digital mammogram. During the 3D part of the exam, the X-ray arm sweeps in a slight arc over your breast, taking multiple breast images. Then, a computer produces a 3D image of your breast tissue in one millimeter slices, providing greater visibility for the radiologist to see breast detail in a way never before possible. They can scroll through images of your entire breast like pages of a book.

What are the benefits of tomosynthesis or 3D breast exams?

With conventional digital mammography, the radiologist is viewing all complexities of your breast tissue in a one flat image. Sometimes breast tissue can overlap, giving the illusion of normal breast tissue looking like an abnormal area. By looking at the breast tissue in one millimeter slices, the radiologist can provide a more confident assessment and find cancers missed with conventional 2D mammography. This reduces the need for your doctor to call you back later for a "second look," because now they can see breast tissue more clearly.

What is the difference between a screening and diagnostic mammogram?

A screening mammogram is your annual mammogram that is done every year. Sometimes the radiologist may ask you to come back for follow-up images, which is called a diagnostic mammogram to rule out an unclear area in the breast or gather more information about a breast complaint that needs to be evaluated.

What should I expect during the 3D mammography exam?

3D mammography complements standard 2D mammography and is performed at the same time with the same system. There is no additional compression required, and it only takes a few seconds longer for each view.

Is there more radiation dose?

Very low X-ray energy is used during the exam, just about the same amount as a traditional mammogram done on film.

Who can have a 3D mammography exam?

It is approved for all women who would be undergoing a standard mammogram, especially those with a personal or family history of breast cancer, dense breasts or who have had a history of suspicious findings.

Contact your doctor about the 3D mammography option for you.

To schedule your annual screening mammogram appointment, call 219-983-8399.

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