



Breast exams and mammograms

Every woman's wellness plan should include regular breast exams. Doing so can help you find problems early.

These three tests are used the most to check breast tissue:

- **Breast self-exam (BSE):** You check your breasts for lumps or anything else that seems unusual.
- **Clinical breast exam (CBE):** A doctor or other health care professional carefully feels the breasts and under your arms for lumps or anything else that seems unusual.
- **Mammogram:** This is a low-dose X-ray picture of the breast. A mammogram along with a breast exam by your doctor can find breast cancer at an early stage when it can best be treated. The amount of radiation used in mammograms is very low, so the risk of any harm is extremely small.

What happens during a mammogram?

A mammogram is a simple test. When you go for a mammogram, the technician taking the picture will place your breast between two X-ray panels. The panels will push your breast between them to get a clear picture. You may feel a little bit of discomfort, but each X-ray takes less than one minute.

Who should get one?

Women ages 40 and up should talk to their doctor about how often to have a mammogram - it varies based on your personal health and family history. A woman's chance of getting breast cancer is greater as she ages.

Women who have had breast cancer or other breast problems or who have a family history of breast cancer might need to start getting mammograms before age 40, or they might need to get them more often. Talk to your doctor about when to start and how often you should have a mammogram.

Source: American Cancer Society, cancer.org.

Why should I have one?

A mammogram can save your life by finding breast cancer early. It can show cancer that is too small for you or your doctor to feel. When breast cancer is found early, you have more treatment options.

Did you know?

70-80 percent of breast cancers occur in women who have no family history of breast cancer.

