

Screening Mammogram versus Diagnostic Mammogram

Screening Mammogram

A screening mammogram is an exam used to detect early breast cancer in women experiencing no symptoms.

Mammography plays a central part in early detection of breast cancers because it can show changes in the breast up to two years before you or your physician can feel them. Current guidelines recommend screening mammography every year beginning at age 40. In addition, women who have had breast cancer and those who are at increased risk due to a genetic history of breast cancer should seek expert medical advice about whether they should begin screening before age 40 and about the frequency of screening.

Diagnostic Mammogram

Diagnostic mammography is used to evaluate a patient with abnormal clinical findings, such as a breast lump or lumps that have been found by the woman or her doctor. Diagnostic mammography may also be done after an abnormal screening mammogram in order to determine the cause of the area of concern on the screening exam.

Eligibility for Screening Mammography

To be eligible for a screening mammogram, the patient must;

- Have no previous history of breast cancer.

- Not have any present symptoms, such as localized pain not related to trauma or injury, lumps or nipple discharge.

- Not be pregnant or breast-feeding.

Eligibility for Diagnostic Mammography

To be eligible for a diagnostic mammogram, the patient must;

- Have an order from physician.

- Have a family or personal history of breast cancer.

- Present symptoms, such as localized pain, lumps or nipple discharge.

Breast Ultrasound

Breast ultrasound is a noninvasive (the skin is not pierced) procedure used to assess the breasts. Ultrasound technology allows quick visualization of the breast tissue. Ultrasound may also be used to assess blood flow to areas inside the breasts. The examination is often used along with mammography

A breast ultrasound procedure is commonly performed to determine if an abnormality detected by mammography or a palpable lump is a fluid-filled cyst or a

solid tumor (benign or malignant). Breast ultrasound may also be used to identify masses in women whose breast tissue is too dense to be measured accurately by mammography. Breast ultrasound is not generally used as a screening tool for breast cancer detection because it does not always detect some early signs of cancer such as micro-calcifications, which are tiny calcium deposits.

Ultrasound may be used in women for whom radiation is contraindicated, such as pregnant women, women younger than 25, and women with silicone breast implants.

There may be other reasons for your physician to recommend breast ultrasound.

Insurance Coverage

We recommend you contact your insurance provider to determine that your mammogram and/or breast ultrasound will be covered. You will be responsible for any balance not paid by your insurance.