

To Our Routine Screening Mammogram Patients -

Mammography is currently the most accurate single method of detecting cancer of the breast in its very early stages, when it is most curable. To ensure accuracy and to prevent unnecessary surgical procedures, additional views or other types of diagnostic procedures are sometimes necessary.



Depending upon your insurance coverage, there may be an additional out-of-pocket charge or co-pay assessed for adjunctive views or procedures that are done to aide the physician with the diagnosis.

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*“We need to
take another
picture...”*



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Common Questions About Extra Views and Procedures

All of our radiologists - doctors who read x-rays - are specially trained and accredited to read mammograms. Our technologists are also certified and accredited in mammography. Both know it is essential to be very careful when performing and reading your mammogram.

In the diligent pursuit of an accurate interpretation, sometimes we request further imaging studies such as additional x-ray views or ultrasound. This happens to about 15% of all screening mammography patients.



👉 If I need to have additional x-rays or tests, does this mean I have a cancer?

The vast majority of women who have extra views do not have cancer. Our responsibility is to be exceedingly cautious and look into any changes in your tissue or areas that may appear suspicious on your films. Often, taking another picture with the breast tissue seen from a different angle will help determine if the area is truly of concern.

👉 Since I need more pictures, does that mean the technologist did something wrong?

No. Our technologists are all highly trained in mammography. Rarely, technical problems do occur, as mammography is a very technically demanding examination. It is highly unusual that additional images are required simply due to a mistake.

👉 Why do I need to have an ultrasound exam if the mammogram is the best test for the detection of breast cancer?

Mammography is the best test for the detection of an abnormality in the breast, but it cannot show if a lump is caused by fluid. Ultrasound can be helpful in characterizing lumps you can feel as well as determining if a mass seen on a mammogram is solid or cystic (fluid-filled). This is very important information and helps determine if biopsy is necessary or not.

👉 What if I need more pictures, but I wasn't able to wait while the doctor read my mammogram?

If you need more images or tests in order for us to make an accurate diagnosis, we will call you and send you a letter in the mail asking you to return to our office. This additional appointment may require an additional insurance co-payment as well.



👉 Common Reasons for Additional Imaging

Interpretive Reasons -

Overlapped tissue — on an x-ray, we are taking a two-dimensional picture of a three-dimensional object. Sometimes the breast tissue can be stacked up, making it look like a mass is present. An additional view taken at a different angle can prove if an area is truly a lesion or is simply the illusion of a mass.

Calcifications — calcium in the breast can sometimes be an indication of cancer. But more often, the presence of calcifications is simply a benign condition. Magnified or additional views can help the doctors determine which type of calcifications are present.

Masses — these also can sometimes be an indication of cancer. To determine if a mass seen on a film is suspicious, the doctor needs to see the border of the mass very clearly. Extra views may be necessary to see all sides of the mass.

Technical Reasons -

Motion — if your breast moves even slightly at the moment the exposure is taken, the mammography image will be blurred. This type of image must be re-taken so that the doctor will have a clear picture of the tissue to make an accurate diagnosis. This is the most common technical reason for a repeated film, but occurs on less than 1% of patients' films.

Anatomical Factors — rarely, a patient's own physical build can make it difficult to obtain a clear picture of all the breast tissue. For instance, an additional view may be necessary if the technologist sees that an area of tissue was not imaged on either of the two routine views due to an exaggerated curvature of the ribs.