

Mammogram

Patient Information

Leongatha Memorial Hospital Medical Imaging

What is a Mammogram?

A diagnostic mammogram is a low dose X-ray examination of the breast which can be performed on female and male patients. This is commonly performed when signs or symptoms are discovered in one or both breasts, a lump or tenderness, nipple discharge or skin changes.

The mammogram helps confirm whether the changes are benign (non-cancerous) and no treatment is needed, or whether the changes may indicate breast cancer and require further tests and treatment. Unfortunately, not all breast cancer can be detected by mammogram.

What preparation is required for a Mammogram?

Please inform the booking clerk if you are breastfeeding or have breast implants as you may need a longer booking time.

Mammogram check list

- No Talcum powder or underarm deodorant to be used on the day of the examination.
- Please bring copies of any previous mammogram films and reports with you.
- If you experience tender breasts during menstruation, try to book your mammogram for one week after.
- Wear a two-piece outfit (skirt or pants and a top). You will be given a gown but only need to remove your clothes from the waist up.



What happens during a Mammogram?

- A specialist Radiographer will perform the mammogram and ask you some questions about your breast history.
- Two views of each breast are routinely taken.
- There will be some compression of breast tissue to ensure a clear view of the tissue being examined. This may cause discomfort but will only last a few seconds.
- Without compression, the X-rays would be blurry which makes it hard to see any abnormality. Compression also reduces the amount of radiation required for the mammogram.
- The examination is reviewed by a Radiologist with specialised training in mammography before you leave.

Further images may need to be performed after discussion with the Radiologist.

What happens after a Mammogram?

After effects are rare, although you may experience breast tenderness. If your skin is fragile, you may rarely experience bruising or splitting of the skin. The result is automatically forwarded to your doctor.

Please return to your doctor to discuss examination results.

Risks:

Like all X-rays, having a mammogram exposes you to some radiation, but only a very small amount. Such risk is far outweighed by the benefit of early detection of breast cancer, significantly reducing the death rate from the disease.

The risk of developing cancer from a mammogram is no greater than developing cancer from exposure to the natural background radiation accumulated from the normal environment in less than one year.

If you have breast implants there is an extremely small risk of damage to the implant. It is important to note that mammography does not detect all breast cancers, even when the cancer has caused a lump that can be felt.

In such a circumstance, a normal mammogram does not mean that the lump can be ignored.

In this situation, other diagnostic tests such as breast ultrasound and needle biopsy may be necessary to find out the cause of the lump.

Any questions please contact us:

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