

YOUR HEALTH & WELL BEING



CIGNA HealthCare
A Business of Caring.



Mammography

Why Should I Have One?

A mammography is an x-ray test of the breasts that is used to help screen for or diagnose breast cancer. Cancer is most easily treated and cured when it is discovered in an early stage, and many small tumors can be seen on a mammogram before they can be felt by a woman or her doctor.

Although breast cancer can occur in men, 99 percent of all breast cancer is found in women. Factors that affect a woman's risk for breast cancer include:

- **Age.** The risk of breast cancer increases gradually as women age. All women age 40 and older are at risk for breast cancer. However, most breast cancers occur in women over age 50, and the risk is especially high for women over age 60.
- **Family medical history.** Having a mother or sister (or both) who had breast cancer increases a woman's risk of developing the disease.
- **Genetic alterations.** Changes in certain genes make women more susceptible to breast cancer.
- **Late childbearing.** Women who had their first child after the age of 30 have a greater chance of developing breast cancer than women who had their children at a younger age.
- **Radiation exposure.** Women whose breasts were exposed to significant amounts of radiation at a young age have an increased risk for developing breast cancer. However, the amount of radiation received from a diagnostic chest x-ray during childhood is not significant and does not increase the risk for developing breast cancer.
- **Previous breast biopsies.** Women who have had at least two breast biopsies done for non-cancerous (benign) breast disease are at increased risk for developing breast cancer.
- **Hormone replacement therapy.** The use of daily estrogen 0.625 mg plus progesterin 2.5 mg for longer than four years slightly increases the risk of developing breast cancer.
- **Breast-feeding.** Recent studies have indicated that breast-feeding reduces the risk of breast cancer.

No one can predict who will develop breast cancer, and many women who develop breast cancer have no significant risk factors for the disease. That's why all organizations that produce guidelines about mammograms recommend regular mammograms every one to two years for women over the age of 40. Most of these organizations recommend yearly mammograms.

Yearly mammograms have been shown to prevent some deaths from breast cancer. If 10,000 women had mammograms every 18 months for 10 years, about four deaths would be prevented. Mammograms do not prevent breast cancer or reduce a woman's risk of developing cancer; however, they can reduce a woman's risk of dying from breast cancer by detecting it earlier than other types of breast cancer screenings.

Doctors also recommend that regular mammographies be combined with clinical breast examinations done by a health professional and self-breast examinations that you can do at home.

Did You Know?

Did you know that periodic health assessments and physical exams are an important part of preventive care? Be sure to schedule regular exams with your doctor and consult with him or her about additional screenings, examinations and immunizations that may be appropriate.

A Woman's Healthy Life Cycle

If you're like most women, you're so busy caring for others that you don't always have time to care for yourself. That's why we've developed a program to guide you through all of the necessary checkups and exams. We can't make your daily life easier, but we can help make it healthier!



Ages 19-39

- Periodic health exam as recommended by your doctor
- Breast self-exam monthly
- Pap smear every 1-3 years
- Cholesterol check for those at high risk, starting at age 25
- Tetanus/diphtheria booster every 10 years
- Measles, Mumps and Rubella vaccine if born after 1956 and lack immunity

Ages 40-49

- Periodic health exam as recommended by your doctor
- Breast self-exam monthly
- Pap smear every 1-3 years
- Clinical breast exam every 1-2 years
- Mammogram every 1-2 years at physician's direction

- Cholesterol screening every 5 years if over 45 years of age
- Tetanus/diphtheria booster every 10 years

Ages 50-64

- Periodic health exam as recommended by your doctor
- Breast self-exam monthly
- Pap smear every 1-3 years
- Clinical breast exam every 1-2 years
- Mammogram every 1-2 years
- Cholesterol screening every 5 years
- Tetanus/diphtheria booster every 10 years
- Hidden blood in stool test every year
- Sigmoidoscopy at physician's direction

Ages 65+

- Periodic health exam as recommended by your doctor
- Breast self-exam monthly
- Clinical breast exam every 1-2 years

- Mammogram every 1-2 years, after age 75 at physician's direction
- Pap smear as recommended by your doctor
- Cholesterol screening every 5 years
- Tetanus/diphtheria booster every 10 years
- Hidden blood in stool test every year
- Sigmoidoscopy at physician's direction
- One-time immunization against pneumococcal diseases
- Influenza immunization every year

Did You Know?

Where can you learn more about health topics important to you? Log-on to myCIGNA.com and go to Healthwise®, an interactive tool that will provide you with online access to information on more than 5,000 topics, including health conditions, everyday health and wellness, first-aid and medical exams.

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