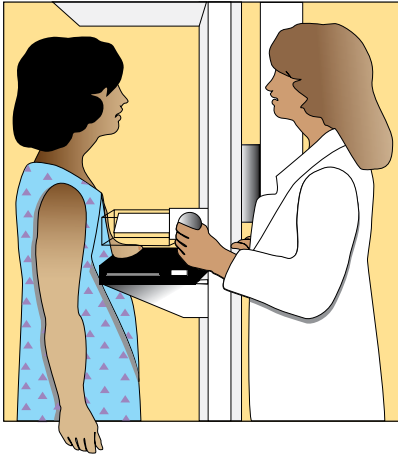


# Quick Information for Your Health

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES • FOOD AND DRUG ADMINISTRATION



## Mammograms and Breast Cancer

### What Is A Mammogram?

A mammogram is a special kind of X-ray of the breasts. Mammograms are used to help find breast cancer early, when it can still be cured. Mammograms are recommended for women older than 40, even if they have no signs of breast cancer.

### What About Younger Women?

Mammograms are also recommended for younger women who have symptoms of breast cancer or who have a high risk of breast cancer.

### Why Are Mammograms Important?

A mammogram can save your life. Mammograms can show tumors that may be cancer long before they can be felt. Treating tumors when they are still small makes curing cancer easier.

You usually need to go to a special clinic to get a mammogram. The FDA inspects and certifies all places in the United States where mammograms are done.

Look for the FDA certificate at the clinic where you go for your mammogram. FDA certification means the clinic's equipment and staff meet federal standards and that your mammogram will be safe and of high quality.

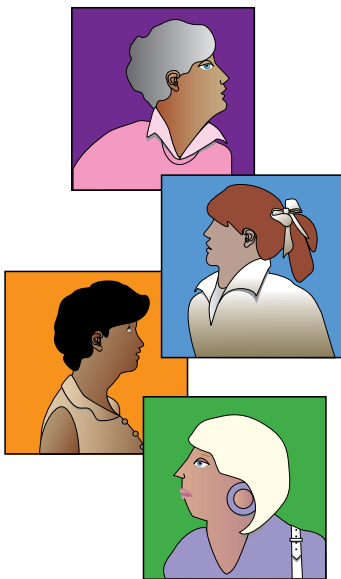
### Who Gets Breast Cancer?

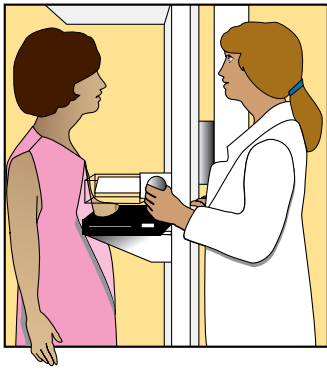
Any woman can get breast cancer. Each year, about 185,000 women in the United States get breast cancer and about 44,000 die from it.

You may be more likely to get breast cancer if you:

- Have a mother or sister who had breast cancer.
- Have inherited certain genes. These genes are more common in people with Jewish ancestors from Eastern Europe.
- Had your first menstrual period before you were 12.
- Stopped having periods after you were 50.
- Never had children or had your first child when you were over 30.
- Have had radiation treatments to your chest area.

Also, the older you are, the more likely you are to get breast cancer. Remember, though, that one out of four women who get breast cancer don't have any of these risks.





## Examinations Are Important

Three kinds of exams can help detect breast cancer:

- Mammography
- Doctor's exam
- Self-exam.

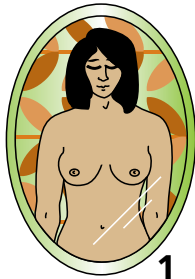
It's important to have a doctor examine your breasts at least once a year. It's also important to examine your breasts yourself once a month.

Some women find it's easiest to do this at the same time each month, for example, when your menstrual period ends.

## How To Examine Your Breasts

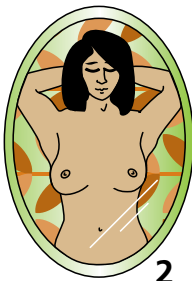
**1.** Look at your breasts in a mirror to see if there is anything you haven't noticed before such as:

- discharge from the nipples
- change in how the nipple looks
- change in how the skin looks.



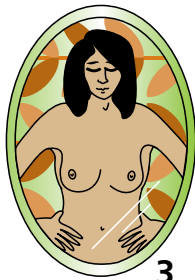
1

**2.** Still looking in the mirror, join your hands behind your head and press them gently against the back of your neck. Are there any changes from last month in how your breasts look?



2

**3.** Still looking in the mirror, press your hands on your hips. Bow slightly forward, pulling your shoulders and elbows forward. Look for changes since last month in how your breasts look.



3

**4.** When you're in the shower and your skin is soapy, do this exam. Raise your left arm. Using 3 or 4 fingers of your right hand, begin at the outer edge of your breast. Press your fingers firmly into your breast and slowly move your hand in circles until you reach the nipple. Make sure you examine the entire breast. In the same way, examine the area between the breast and armpit, and then the armpit itself. Do you feel any lump under the skin? Gently squeeze the nipple. Is there any discharge? Do the same thing with your right arm raised and your left hand examining your right breast.



4

**5.** Get out of the shower, dry off, and lie down on your back. Repeat the same exam as in #4.



5

## What If My Mammogram Shows A Problem?

Mammograms can show if the inside of the breast looks normal. But a mammogram can't show for sure if you have breast cancer.

If you have a mammogram that doesn't look normal, your doctor will probably suggest a biopsy—a tissue sample of the breast. A biopsy is minor surgery. The breast tissue from a biopsy is tested in a laboratory to see if it's cancerous.

Remember, just because a problem area shows up on your mammogram that doesn't mean you have cancer. Cancer can be diagnosed only by a lab test on tissue from your breast.



## How Breast Cancer Is Treated

There are a number of treatments for breast cancer. The treatment depends on the type of tumor, if the cancer has spread, and other facts you and your doctor will discuss. Some treatments are:

**Lumpectomy**—Surgery that removes the lump or tumor and a small amount of breast tissue around it, leaving the rest of the breast. A lumpectomy is usually the preferred treatment when cancer hasn't spread outside the breast.

**Total Mastectomy**—Surgery that removes the entire breast and usually the adjoining lymph nodes. This may be necessary when there is more than one cancer in the breast, or when a single cancer is large when compared to the breast. Breast reconstruction is usually available to women who have had a breast removed. If you have a breast removed, you may want to talk with your doctor about various types of surgical breast reconstruction and decide if reconstruction is right for you.

**Radiation Therapy**—Radiation from special equipment is aimed at the tumor to kill cancer cells and shrink the tumor.

**Treatment With One Or More Drugs**—Radiation and drug treatment are often given after surgery.

## How To Find A Clinic

To find out what mammography clinics in your area are certified by the FDA, call (800) 4-CANCER (422-6237) or a local chapter of the American Cancer Society listed in your phone book. If you are hearing impaired, you can call (800) 332-8615 (TTY). If you have computer access to the Internet, you can find a list of FDA-certified facilities on [www.fda.gov/cdrh/mammography.certified.html](http://www.fda.gov/cdrh/mammography.certified.html)



## Do You Have More Questions?

The FDA may have an office near you. Look for the number in the blue pages of the phone book.

You can also call the FDA on its toll-free number, (888) INFO-FDA (463-6332). Or look on the Internet at [www.fda.gov](http://www.fda.gov)

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The Food and Drug Administration is an agency of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services that makes sure that mammogram facilities are inspected and certified.

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