

# Screenings Available for Breast Health

Breast cancer screening tests can save lives. That's just one reason why they're such important health tools. They also let you play an active role in taking care of yourself. Screenings can even help you and your doctor catch diseases or illness before you have symptoms.



## What is a Screening?

A screening is a type of medical test or exam you do regularly. The goal is to see if you have cancer or another illness even if you don't feel or look sick yet. Screenings don't keep you from getting sick. They do help doctors find health problems early. The earlier a disease is diagnosed, the easier it is for doctors to treat.

## Clinical breast exams

This exam happens in your doctor's office. Your doctor does a thorough check of your breasts. They use their hands to feel for lumps or other unusual features in your breast tissue. The doctor may also visually examine your breasts. They check to see if your breasts are the same size and shape. Skin changes can also be signs of breast cancer. Your doctor checks for rashes, redness, large veins, and skin dimpling or puckering. Finally, your doctor checks your nipples for bleeding, discharge or soreness.

Get a clinical breast exam every one to three years starting at age 20. When you turn 40, start having one every year. If someone in your family has had breast cancer, you might choose to do screenings more often.

## Mammograms

A mammogram is a detailed picture of the inside of your breast tissue. Doctors use high-powered, digital X-rays to take the pictures. Because the images are so detailed, doctors can see abnormal features inside your breasts. Lumps and tiny white spots inside breast tissue can be signs of cancer. Seeing these in the pictures can help doctors find cancer before it causes symptoms you can feel.

During a mammogram, you undress from the waist up. The technician who operates the X-ray machine places each of your breasts on the machine's platform. A plate automatically comes down and compresses your breast from top to bottom. Flattening the breast tissue helps the machine get a clearer picture of each breast. The machine also compresses your breasts for side-view photos. Each photo takes about 10 seconds. A mammogram usually takes less than half an hour to finish.

How often you get mammograms usually depends on your age. The American Cancer Society recommends that women:

- 40 to 44 have the option to start mammograms.
- 45 to 54 have mammograms once a year.
- 55 and older have mammograms every one or two years.



## Ultrasounds

Like X-rays, ultrasounds are also imaging tests. They use sound waves to see inside your body. A healthcare professional called a sonographer helps you through the exam. They apply a cooling gel to your breast. Then, they run a wand-like device over your breast. As the wand moves, it sends out sound waves that bounce back to the machine. This creates very detailed pictures and videos of the tissues inside your breast. Usually, a doctor orders this test if something abnormal appears on your mammogram.

**Are you ready to get started?**

**Call 513-952-5000 today to set up an appointment with a specialist.**

We'll help you figure out the screenings you need as we work together to improve your health.



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