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## New Year, New You: Why Mammograms Matter for Women's Health

Take a deep breath. Now, let it go. You've made it through the first months of the new year.

If celebrating is the last thing on your mind (hello, pandemic blues!), you're not alone. So much of what we hold dear – our families, friends, jobs, and daily routines – has been upended over the last two years.

Preventive healthcare has been negatively impacted. Regular breast screenings have declined nearly 87% since April 2020[1] in a major hit to women's health nationwide. With more women, especially minorities, getting breast cancer (and at a younger age)[2], access to mammograms matters more than ever before.

Now, vaccines are bringing some relief. Precision Imaging Centers powered by HALO Diagnostics is open for in-person visits, and we're urging patients to take charge of their health whenever possible.

Breast health is women's health – and getting your annual mammogram is an easy way to kick your year and health into high gear.

### Breast Health Basics

Your breast health matters year-round. Below are some ways to stay on top of your health while waiting for your mammogram.

#### Be Aware

Self-examination is an important part of noticing any changes in your body. What is typical for your breasts? Notice their shape, size, texture, and color – each of us is different. If you see or feel any lumps, nipple discharge, nipple pain, skin dimpling, or swelling, call your doctor to schedule a clinical breast exam. You can't prevent breast cancer with self-exams, but you can detect changes early and early detection saves lives.

#### Get Moving

It's no secret that exercise is good for you – and it can boost your breast health, too. Whether you like to walk or run, practice yoga, or prefer to hike, moving more has been shown to play an important role in protecting against breast cancer by regulating inflammation, hormones, the gut microbiome, and more.[3]

#### Know Your Limits

After a long day, you might unwind with a glass of wine. If you turn to your favorite Merlot or Riesling daily, sip sensibly: A recent study found alcohol intake contributes to increased breast cancer risk, especially in women under 60.[4]

#### Eat Green

From kale and cucumber to broccoli and bok choy, getting your fill of leafy, crunchy green vegetables – and following a healthy, plant-based diet – may reduce your breast cancer risk.[5]

## The Importance of Mammograms

You've scheduled your mammogram and waited patiently for your appointment to arrive. It's time for your mammogram – and you won't want to miss it.

Still, you might wonder, "Do I really need a mammogram?" If you're over 40, the simple answer is yes. One every year.

If you have a family history of breast cancer, or notice any changes to your breasts, the answer is yes.

*But 8 out of 9 women diagnosed with breast cancer have no family history of the disease.*

With routine mammograms, your radiologist can catch breast cancer sooner. Early detection makes a difference: Patients have more treatment options and a higher chance at survival, with a nearly 100% 5-year survival rate.

### Types of Mammograms

Thanks to advances in technology, mammograms are changing how and when we detect breast cancer: faster, smoother, sooner.

Today, you'll find two main types of mammograms:

- **Digital mammograms** use x-ray film and convert it to electrical signals, creating flat, 2D images that are easily viewable on film or a computer screen. Digital mammograms are a step up from traditional, film-screen mammograms.
- **3D mammograms** capture x-ray images of the breast and convert them to 3D images. Your doctor gets detailed views of tissue, including any masses or distortions related to cancer and pre-cancerous cells.

3D mammograms are the gold standard in breast screenings today. They detect 41% more invasive cancers, or those that spread outside the milk duct into healthy breast tissue. These screenings reduce false positives by up to 40% and are clinically proven to be superior to digital mammograms.

## What Comes Next?

You've just had your mammogram. What happens next?

You'll receive your results. If your radiologist gives you the all-clear, you can move on knowing you've taken an important step for your health. (Just don't forget to schedule next year's screening!)

If your radiologist spots any abnormalities, they'll schedule you for one or more follow-up tests.

### Breast Ultrasound

You might associate an ultrasound (also called a sonogram) with determining a baby's sex during pregnancy. Much like an abdominal ultrasound, a breast ultrasound, or diagnostic mammogram, gives your radiologist views into abnormal areas of the breast.

The procedure is quick and painless. Your radiologist might find a benign (non-cancerous) condition such as a cyst or see that the breast tissue is normal.

### Breast Biopsy

If your doctor spots something suspicious on your ultrasound, they may take a tissue sample, or biopsy, to check for breast cancer. If the biopsy finds normal tissue, you can resume your regular, yearly screenings. If it confirms cancer, your doctor will work with you to discuss your options.

### Breast MRI

The next step is an important one: determining the extent of your cancer.

Your doctor might recommend a breast MRI. Magnetic resonance imaging uses magnetic fields and radio waves to produce detailed images of your breast. Your radiologist will study these images and stage your breast cancer so that you receive the best treatment possible for your condition.

This is a key part of your cancer journey – and to getting your life back on track – one that all began with a mammogram.

## Contact Us

Precision Imaging Centers powered by HALO Diagnostics offers each of these breast screenings and diagnostic tests at our four Florida locations in Jacksonville, Jacksonville Beach, Fleming Island, and St. Augustine.

Schedule your mammogram today. We make it easy, and it takes just 15 minutes. Give us a call at (904) 996-8100.

[1] Degroff, A., Miller, J., Sharma, K., et al. COVID-19 impact on screening test volume through the National Breast and Cervical Cancer early detection program, January–June 2020, in the United States. Preventive Medicine. Published online June 30, 2021. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jypmed.2021.106559>

[2] Gao, Y., Samreen, N., & Heller, S.L. Non-BRCA early-onset breast cancer in young women. Radiographics. Published online January 6, 2022. <https://doi.org/10.1148/rg.210109>

[3] Hong, B.S. & Lee, K.P. A systematic review of the biological review mechanisms linking physical activity and breast cancer. Physical Activity and Nutrition. Published online September 30, 2020. <https://dx.doi.org/10.20463%2Fpan.2020.0018>

[4] Frankland, M. & Brown, T. (2021). Breast health. In Each woman's menopause: An evidence-based resource. Springer. Published online December 3, 2021.

[5] Nanclares-Romanos, A., Willett, W.A., Rosner, B.A., Collins, L.C., Hu, F.B., Toledo, E., & Eliassen, A.H. Healthful and unhealthful plant-based diets and risk of breast cancer in U.S. women: Results from the nurses' health studies. Cancer Epidemiology, Biomarkers & Prevention. Published online October 2021. doi: 10.1158/1055-9965.EPI-21-0352

## Getting Answers is Easy

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