

# Family history screening mammogram

Breast imaging, Radiology

The prevention of infection is a major priority in all healthcare and everyone has a part to play.

- Please decontaminate your hands frequently for 20 seconds using soap and water or alcohol gel if available
- If you have symptoms of diarrhoea and/or vomiting, cough or other respiratory symptoms, a temperature or any loss of taste or smell please do not visit the hospital or any other care facility and seek advice from 111
- Keep the environment clean and tidy
- Let's work together to keep infections out of our hospitals and care homes.



# Introduction

You have been advised by the Clinical Genetics department to have regular mammograms (X-rays of your breasts) due to your family history of breast cancer. This leaflet has been written to help you understand what the examination involves and give you information about the family history breast screening programme.

## What is a family history screening mammogram?

A mammogram is a low-dose X-ray of the breast tissue, carried out by female radiographers (mammographers). It is the most effective and reliable way of finding breast cancer, but it is not perfect as some cancers do not show on the X-rays.

The family history screening programme offers mammograms at regular intervals due to your increased risk of developing breast cancer. The type, interval and duration of your screening will be dependent on your age and your risk. This is determined by the Clinical Genetics Department.

Screening mammograms can save lives as it can find breast cancers at an early stage, when they are too small to see or feel. Screening does not prevent you from getting breast cancer.

## Consent

- The radiographer will discuss the risks and benefits of regular family history screening mammograms with you. You will have the opportunity to ask any questions you may have on this. You will also be asked to sign a form to give consent for the family history screening programme to invite you at routine intervals for mammograms. You will be asked to remove the clothing from the top half of your body, including your bra, and wear a hospital gown. It is easier to wear a skirt or trousers instead of a dress for your appointment
- The radiographer will explain the procedure to you.

## What are the benefits of having the procedure?

A family history screening mammogram will not prevent breast cancer but it can detect a breast cancer as early as possible, before you may be able to feel it. This means that often the treatment is less drastic and there is more chance of curing the disease.

## What are the risks of the procedure?

- There are some risks involved with the use of X-rays. The overriding concern of your doctor and Radiology is to ensure that when radiation is used the benefits from making the right diagnosis outweigh any small risk involved
- X-rays can very rarely cause cancer. According to the National Breast Screening Programme having a mammogram every 3 years for 20 years can very slightly increase the chance of getting cancer over a woman's lifetime. Radiologists and Radiographers who perform the examination are trained to ensure that the radiation dose associated with the examination is always kept to a minimum
- A mammogram is the most effective way of finding breast cancer, however it can miss cancers but this is rare
- Some women are recalled for further imaging following an abnormal mammogram result. These women may experience unnecessary worry and distress. Most women who receive a letter recalling them for further imaging following an abnormal result are not found to have breast cancer
- Screening using mammograms can save lives by finding life-threatening cancers. However, there is a debate that sometimes following screening women can be diagnosed and treated for a type of cancer that would never cause harm or be life-threatening.

## Are there any alternatives to a mammogram?

There is not an alternative examination that can be offered instead of a mammogram. Mammograms are the gold standard test used to check for abnormalities within the breast, it is not recognised practice to use other tests such as ultrasound or MRI alone in breast screening.

## What will I need to do before the procedure?

- On the very first appointment for family history screening you will discuss your family history with the radiographer. Be prepared for the radiographer to ask you questions and record details regarding your risk within your file.

## How long will I be at the hospital for?

Please expect to be at the hospital for at least 40 minutes.

## What will happen during the procedure?

- The radiographer will ask you to remove your hospital gown and she will position your breast onto the X-ray machine
- The breast is compressed (squashed) with a clear plastic plate attached to the X-ray machine whilst the X-ray is taken. The compression lasts a couple of seconds and automatically lifts off your breast once the X-ray has been taken. Some women find the compression uncomfortable; however it lasts just a short moment. Compression of the breast is key to obtaining accurate X-rays as it minimises movement which causes blurring of the X-ray and it spreads the breast tissue out evenly. Compressing the breast also minimises the amount of radiation needed to produce the image
- On average the radiographer will take two X-rays of each breast, from different angles. One X-ray will be taken from the top and one X-ray will be taken from the side of your breast. The radiographer will go behind the screen whilst the X-rays are taken
- The radiographer may need to take more than the average total of 4 X-rays. Sometimes the X-ray is blurred or the whole of your breast is not included on the X-ray. Rarely a technical problem may occur and the radiographer may need to repeat the X-ray
- You can choose to stop the procedure at any point during the procedure but this may mean we do not have enough information to write a full report

## What will happen after the procedure?

The radiographer will ask you to get dressed and will tell you how you will get your results.

## What is the aftercare advice?

Rarely women feel discomfort following the procedure. If your breasts feel tender following the examination please take over the counter painkillers, such as paracetamol as per the instructions on the packet.

## Will it be painful?

Some patients experience mild discomfort or pain when the breast is compressed. Compression of the breast lasts for a few seconds and automatically releases when the X-ray is taken. Although it is rare, some women experience aching and discomfort of the breast following the procedure.

## Can I go back to work?

Yes, you can continue with your normal daily activities.

## What follow up should I expect?

Your doctor or member of the breast imaging team will discuss how you will get the results of the mammogram with you.

As you will be entered onto the screening programme please expect to be invited for mammograms regularly, at intervals decided by the Clinical Genetics Department.

**Please notify us of any changes to your contact details so that the appointment system can be updated to ensure you receive future appointments.**

## What to do if the appointment is not suitable?

We are happy to change your appointment; however please be aware that certain sessions within the week will not be available due to different clinics being supported by Breast Imaging. You can contact us on **01902 695923**. This is a direct line; you will not need to go through switchboard.

If you are unable to attend your appointment please let us know as soon as possible so that the appointment can be given to another patient.

Due to a high demand for this service, if you fail to attend for your appointment then another one will not be automatically generated unless you contact the department on the telephone number above.

If you no longer wish to remain on the screening programme please contact the Breast Imaging Department.

## Whom can I speak to if I want to ask questions before I come for my family history screening mammogram?

The breast care nurses can be contacted on **01902 695144** during office hours of 8:30am and 4:00pm. There is a 24 hour answer machine on this line and if the breast care nurses are unavailable then please leave your name and telephone number and someone will return your call as soon as possible.

Alternatively if you would like to speak to a radiographer / sonographer about the procedure then please call **01902 695923** during office hours of 8.30am to 5pm.

## English

If you need information in another way like easy read or a different language please let us know.

If you need an interpreter or assistance please let us know.

## Lithuanian

Jeigu norėtumėte, kad informacija jums būtų pateikta kitu būdu, pavyzdžiui, supaprastinta forma ar kita kalba, prašome mums apie tai pranešti.

Jeigu jums reikia vertėjo ar kitos pagalbos, prašome mums apie tai pranešti.

## Polish

Jeżeli chcieliby Państwo otrzymać te informacje w innej postaci, na przykład w wersji łatwej do czytania lub w innym języku, prosimy powiedzieć nam o tym.

Prosimy poinformować nas również, jeżeli potrzebowałby Państwo usługi tłumaczenia ustnego lub innej pomocy.

## Punjabi

ਜੇ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਇਹ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਰੂਪ ਵਿਚ, ਜਿਵੇਂ ਪੜ੍ਹਨ ਵਿਚ ਆਸਾਨ ਰੂਪ ਜਾਂ ਕਿਸੇ ਦੂਜੀ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਿਚ, ਚਾਹੀਦੀ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਦੱਸੋ।

ਜੇ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਦੁਭਾਸ਼ੀਏ ਦੀ ਜਾਂ ਸਹਾਇਤਾ ਦੀ ਲੋੜ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਦੱਸੋ।

## Romanian

Dacă aveți nevoie de informații în alt format, ca de exemplu caractere ușor de citit sau altă limbă, vă rugăm să ne informați.

Dacă aveți nevoie de un interpret sau de asistență, vă rugăm să ne informați.

## Traditional Chinese

如果您需要以其他方式了解信息，如易读或其他语种，请告诉我们。

如果您需要口译人员或帮助，请告诉我们。