American Cancer Society Mammography Guidelines

Baseline mammogram---- age 35

The American Cancer Society recommends every woman follow a three-step approach to protect herself against breast cancer.

**Mammography**
1. Annual mammograms if you are age 40 or over.
2. If there is a history of breast cancer in the family, discuss a personal mammography-screening schedule with a health care provider.

**Clinical Breast Examination**
1. After age 40, get a clinical breast exam by a health care provider every year.
2. Between the ages of 20 and 39, have a clinical breast exam by a health care provider at least once every three years.

**Breast Self Exam**
1. Ask a health care provider to teach you the proper way to perform a thorough breast self-exam.
2. Beginning at age 20, examine your breasts monthly. If there are any lumps, thickenings or changes report them to your physician immediately. Most breast lumps are NOT cancer, but further tests may be needed.

A mammogram is an x-ray exam of the breast. The breast is squeezed between two plastic plates that are attached to the mammogram machine. This compression is needed to make sure there is little movement of the breast and it makes the images sharper. This compression lasts for only a few seconds.

Current mammograms are always compared to previous mammograms. These films are looked at by a Radiologist, a specialist in interpreting x-ray images. Reading mammograms is very challenging. There is great variation in breast tissue from woman to woman. Some breast cancers produce very small changes in the breast tissue and are therefore very hard to detect.

A screening mammogram is an x-ray of the breast in a woman who has no symptoms. The goal of a screening mammogram is to detect cancers when they are still too small to be felt by a woman or her physician. A screening mammogram consists of 2 pictures of each breast, done with compression and including as much breast tissue as possible.

Creighton University Medical Center is a FDA accredited mammography facility. Please provide us with the location of your last mammogram when you schedule your procedure. On the day of your appointment, please don’t wear deodorant or antiperspirant. You will be asked to fill out an in depth breast questionnaire. You may find it more convenient to wear a two piece outfit because you will be asked to disrobe from the waist up. Try to schedule your appointment when your breasts are not tender because compression will be applied to your breasts.

Only 2 to 4 mammograms out of every 1,000 lead to a cancer diagnosis. About 10% of women who have mammograms will require more tests and the majority will only require additional mammograms pictures. Only 8%-10% of these women will need a biopsy and most (80%) of those biopsies will not be cancer.