

# Mammography

X-Ray Department  
Tel: 01271 322741

## Other formats

If you need this information in another format such as audio CD, Braille, large print, high contrast, British Sign Language or translated into another language, please contact the PALS desk on 01271 314090 or at [rduh.pals-northern@nhs.net](mailto:rduh.pals-northern@nhs.net).

## What is a mammogram?

A mammogram is an x-ray examination which involves compression of your breasts in order to obtain good quality images. These images can be used to detect and evaluate breast changes.

## Why is it needed?

The specialist in the Breast Clinic has asked us to carry out this test. Like any medical test, mammograms are often helpful but they are not 100% accurate and will not detect every problem in the breast. A mammogram that appears to be normal can never guarantee there is no problem such as breast cancer. Whatever the result of the mammogram, it is important to continue self-examination and to report any changes to your own doctor.

## What does it involve?

A female radiographer will take you into the X-ray Room and will ask you to partly undress and remove your bra. To make this easier, it is advisable to wear separates rather than all-in-one underwear. You will be asked to stand next to the X-ray machine. The breast is held firmly between two plastic plates and x-rays are taken; usually two x-rays of each side. Some women find the examination uncomfortable and a few say it is painful particularly if the breasts are tender. Sometimes more than two views might be needed.

## How long will it take?

The mammogram might take up to 15 minutes. Sometimes an ultrasound scan may be needed to help us understand the films. We may be able to offer this at the time of the mammogram, but sometimes a further appointment will be needed.

## What special preparations are needed?

Before you attend for your mammogram, please let us know if you have had any previous mammograms performed at another hospital or screening centre, by phoning 01271 322741 between 9am and 5pm. If we have your previous mammograms, we can compare the images and this will ensure that your specialist gets a report as soon as possible.

On the day of your mammogram, please do not use a spray deodorant or talcum powder as this may show up on your mammogram. You can use roll-on deodorant

## What about my general health?

Please let the radiographer know:

- If you are pregnant or breastfeeding
- If you have breast implants, or
- If your breasts are very tender and/or you have had a recent operation or needle biopsy.

Prior to your appointment, it is also useful to know:

- If you have reduced mobility or shoulder problems – we can allow more time for your appointment.
- If your breasts are particularly painful at certain times of the month – we may be able to change the appointment to a different time.

## Are there any side effects?

The examination may be uncomfortable, but we would not expect any lasting effects.

## Follow up

The results of the examination are sent to your hospital specialist. Sometimes there may be a delay in issuing the report if films have to be obtained from another hospital for comparison, or if our films have to be sent for a second opinion.

## Further information

If you have any concerns or questions about your mammogram, please telephone the X-ray Department on **01271 322741** between 9am and 5pm, Monday to Friday.

## **PALS**

The Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) ensures that the NHS listens to patients, relatives, carers and friends, answers questions and resolves concerns as quickly as possible. If you have a query or concern call 01271 314090 or email [rduh.pals-northern@nhs.net](mailto:rduh.pals-northern@nhs.net). You can also visit the PALS and Information Centre in person at North Devon District Hospital, Barnstaple.

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