

# Having a mammogram

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**This leaflet explains what happens during a mammogram examination in the Radiology (X-ray) Department at the Royal Berkshire Hospital.**

**A radiographer (X-ray practitioner) will carry out the mammogram.**

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## Introduction

- Please telephone and let us know if you have limited mobility and are unable to stand, as you will need a longer appointment time for the X-ray.
- Please telephone and let us know if you have implants, as you will need a longer appointment time for the X-ray.
- **Please bring your appointment letter or your X-ray request card with you.**
- The radiographer who will carry out the examination will greet you in the waiting area.
- A relative or friend may accompany you to your appointment; however, no childcare facilities are available.

## What is a mammogram?

A mammogram is an X-ray examination of the breast that is carried out using purpose-built specialised equipment. The examination will take between 10 and 15 minutes. A female radiographer who is specially trained in mammography will carry out the examination.

## Why do I need a mammogram?

- You may have been seen by the hospital breast consultant following a referral by your GP and a mammogram may have been requested to provide additional information for the consultant.
- You may have been referred for a mammogram on the family history pathway.
- Alternatively, you may have been invited for a mammogram as part of the National Breast Screening Programme. The Breast Screening Department will automatically invite women to attend for a mammogram when they reach the age stipulated by the programme.

## What happens during the mammogram?

- We will ask you to undress to the waist and stand up close to the machine. The radiographer will position your breast so it is pressed tightly by a perspex plate lowered onto the breast. This may be slightly uncomfortable but should not be painful.
- The pressure by the plate is essential to get detailed pictures, and is held for only a few seconds while the X-ray is taken. Pictures are usually taken with the breast in two different positions. Additional views are required if you have breast implants.
- We will ask you to wait while the radiographer checks the films to make sure that all the breast tissue is seen clearly.

## Are there any risks with this test?

- The radiation is kept to a very low dose and this is because the breast is made up of soft tissue only.
- Please tell the radiographer if the skin underneath your breast is sore or red, so we can take extra care.

## After the mammogram

- You will have no long-lasting effects from having a mammogram.
- You may have a slight redness to the skin as a result of the applied pressure, but this will disappear very quickly.
- You may also feel some tenderness, which may be reduced by taking your usual pain relief.

## Results

- A report of your examination will be sent to your referring doctor; your GP will receive a copy of the report.
- If you have been invited by the Breast Screening Programme, your GP will be sent your results and you will also receive a copy. You will receive another invitation for breast screening in a further three years.
- If you need to return for a further consultation, you will receive a letter with an appointment.

## Further information

[www.nhs.uk/Conditions/breast-cancer-screening/Pages/what-happens.aspx](http://www.nhs.uk/Conditions/breast-cancer-screening/Pages/what-happens.aspx)

[www.cancerscreening.nhs.uk/breastscreen/publications/ia-02.html](http://www.cancerscreening.nhs.uk/breastscreen/publications/ia-02.html)

To find out more about our Trust visit [www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk](http://www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk)

**Please ask if you need this information in another language or format.**

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Radiology Department, September 2023

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