

## WHAT TO EXPECT AT YOUR MAMMOGRAM APPOINTMENT

- If you are pregnant or breastfeeding, inform your technologist before your exam so they can ensure your comfort.
- The exam process is the same as a standard mammogram and compression of the breast is necessary to obtain clear images.

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

- ✓ Screening mammograms are safe during pregnancy
- ✓ Diagnostic mammograms are safe and appropriate for pregnant patients with symptoms
- ✓ Mammography can be performed safely during breastfeeding and need not be delayed
- ✓ Early detection is critical – don't delay your recommended screening

For more information,  
speak with your doctor or  
mammography technologist.  
**Your health is our priority!**

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# Mammography During Pregnancy & Breastfeeding

## What You Need to Know

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# Understanding Mammography and Pregnancy

Mammograms are an essential tool for detecting breast cancer early, and recent guidelines from the **American College of Radiology (ACR)** confirm that **screening mammograms are safe for pregnant patients**. If you are pregnant or think you may be, you might have questions about the safety and necessity of mammograms. This pamphlet is designed to provide clear, evidence-based information about mammography during pregnancy and breastfeeding.

## IS MAMMOGRAPHY SAFE DURING PREGNANCY?

Yes. **Mammography is safe for pregnant patients**. Here's why:

- The amount of radiation used in mammography is extremely low. **No harmful effects on a developing baby occur below 50 mGy** (the dose from a standard mammogram is **significantly** below this level at an estimated 0.002 to 0.01 mGy).
- **Modern mammography equipment minimizes radiation scatter**, meaning that exposure to areas outside the breast is negligible.
- Abdominal shielding is **not necessary**.

## WHO SHOULD GET A MAMMOGRAM DURING PREGNANCY?

- All patients aged 40 and older should continue annual screening mammograms, even during pregnancy.
- **Patients aged 30–39 at increased risk of breast cancer (e.g., family history, genetic predisposition)** may also need screening.
- If you have any new breast symptoms (lump, pain, nipple discharge or skin changes), a **diagnostic mammogram** and/or **breast ultrasound** may be recommended, regardless of age.

## MAMMOGRAPHY AND BREASTFEEDING

Breastfeeding patients can safely undergo mammography. Here's what you need to know:

- Breast density increases during lactation, which can make mammogram images harder to interpret. However, mammograms are still a useful tool to look for breast cancer.
- If you are breastfeeding and scheduled for a mammogram, **breastfeed or pump just before your exam** to help improve image clarity.



## COMMON QUESTIONS ABOUT MAMMOGRAPHY DURING PREGNANCY & BREASTFEEDING



**Will radiation from a mammogram harm my baby?**

No. The radiation dose from a mammogram is extremely low and well below the threshold associated with fetal effects. The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG) classifies mammography as a very low dose examination and recommends age-appropriate screening mammography be performed during pregnancy.

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**What if I am unsure whether I need a mammogram while pregnant?**

Talk to your healthcare provider. If you are 40 or older, your regular screening mammogram should not be delayed. If you are younger than 40 and have concerns, discuss your risk factors with your doctor.

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**Should I delay a mammogram until after I give birth?**

No. Delaying a needed mammogram could result in a missed or delayed breast cancer diagnosis. Early detection is key to effective treatment.

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