

## What happens if **an abnormality** is detected?

- After the mammography exam, the images are transferred to the radiologist
- If a possible breast cancer lesion is detected on the mammogram, other examinations will be necessary to get the information needed for an accurate diagnosis. Such exams could involve ultrasound, contrast-enhanced spectral mammography (CESM), MRI and/or a breast tissue biopsy

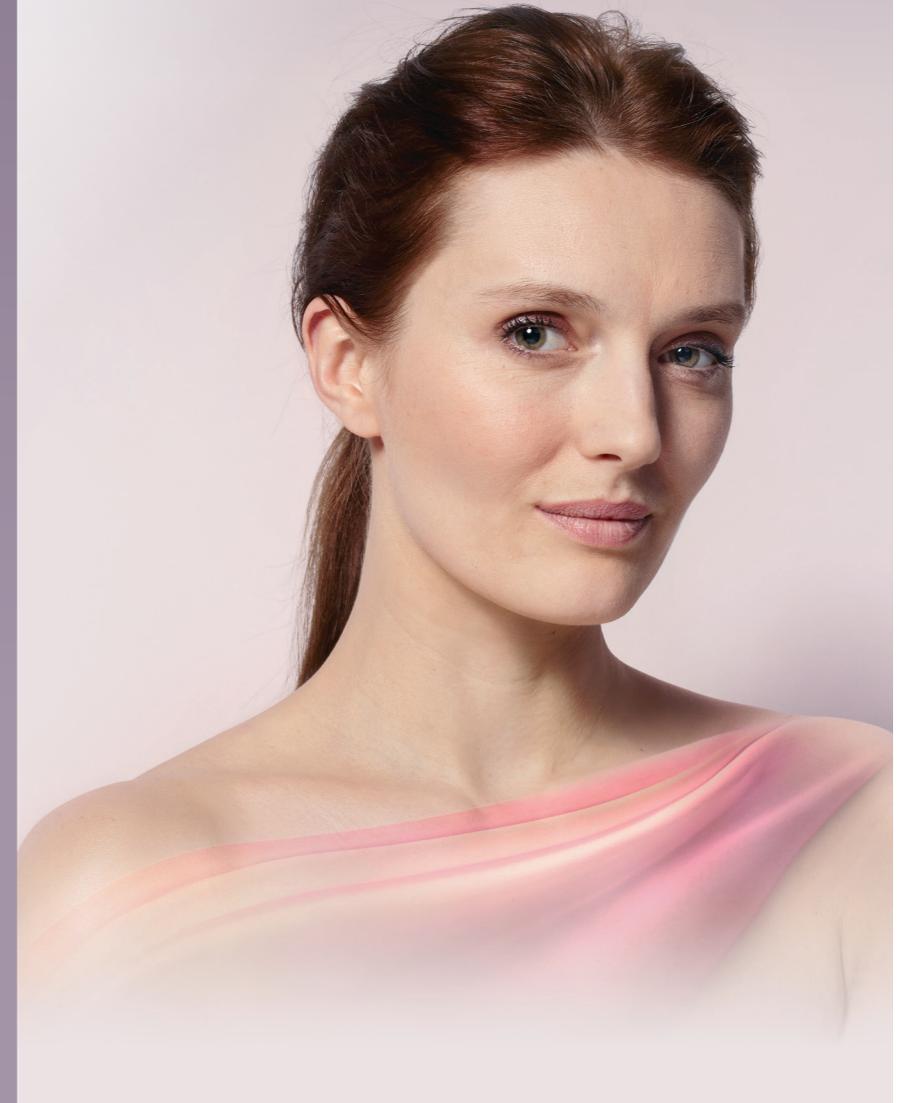


*If you have any additional questions,  
please don't hesitate to ask the  
medical staff*



WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT

# Mammography



# Understanding your mammography exam

## What is a mammogram?

A mammogram is a low radiation-dose x-ray exam that produces an image of your breast that radiologists use to help detect and analyze the presence of lesions (e.g. tumors, cysts, calcifications).

## Why should I get a mammogram?

1 in 8 women will develop breast cancer over the course of their lives\*. Mammography exams allow radiologists to detect possible abnormalities in the breast at early stage, when it's easier to treat.

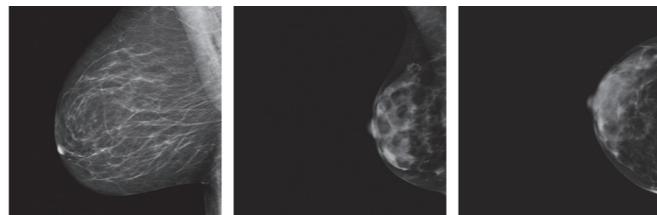


\* source : National Cancer Institute

## What steps are involved in a mammography exam?

- » You will be invited to remove your shirt and leave your belongings in the **dressing room**
- » When you're ready, the radiographer will guide you into the **examination room** and explain where to stand
- » The radiographer will then carefully **position your breast** on the detector plate and show you where you can comfortably place your arm
- » Once properly positioned, **your breast will be compressed** so that the lowest possible radiation dose will be needed for a precise image
- » If you are receiving a **digital breast tomosynthesis (DBT or 3D)** exam, then **multiple acquisitions will be taken** at different angles. This gives the radiologist greater visibility into the different layers of the breast to help them better detect abnormalities 
- » On average, a mammography **examination lasts for a few minutes**, unless additional views or exams are required

*Your mammography images will look similar to this*



## Is it really painful?

Breast compression is necessary to obtain the image quality needed to accurately detect lesions in a mammography image and limit absorbed radiation dose.

Today, many, mammography systems are designed to improve patient comfort. For instance, mammography units are equipped with safety mechanisms that limit compression at an identified level to prevent unnecessary pain. In some cases, under the radiographer supervision, women even have the possibility to play an active role in determining their level of breast compression, with the help of a remote control.

Also, mammography exams are often scheduled at the early to middle stage of her menstrual cycle, when her breasts are less sensitive and easiest to image.