

MedBen

WellCare



benefitness for you.

Vol. 6, No. 9

October 2018

Mammography 101

As October is National Breast Cancer Awareness month, it's a timely opportunity to remind women about the importance of getting a mammogram... and for those who have never been tested for breast cancer, to offer a brief explanation of what a mammogram is and why it's important.

A **screening mammogram** is the most common type of test, used to look for breast tissue changes in women who don't have any symptoms or problems. During the test, low-dose X-ray pictures of each breast are taken from two different angles by a breast imaging specialist, with the goal of detecting a possible cancer at its earliest stages.

Should you personally detect unusual signs or symptoms in one or both breasts, or a screening mammogram reveals breast changes, a **diagnostic mammogram** is recommended. This procedure may require X-rays from additional angles, with a radiologist overseeing the test and reviewing the images. In 90% of diagnostic mammograms, women are cleared and can return to normal screenings.

While there are multiple schools of thought on when to begin tests, MedBen WellLiving recommends that women start getting screening mammograms at age 40 every two years. Women with a family history of breast cancer should speak to their doctor about earlier or more frequent tests.

Between screenings, keep in mind that research estimates that about one-third of breast cancers can be prevented through proper lifestyle choices. To reduce your risk, talk to your doctor about your health habits during your annual wellness exam.



Your Pre-Screening "To Do" List

Before your mammogram, the American Cancer Society suggests these preparations.

- If possible, use a facility that specializes in mammograms and does many tests each day.
- For easier mammogram comparisons, try to go to the same facility every time.
- If visiting a new facility, try to get and bring records from previous mammograms.
- Get tested when your breasts are not tender or swollen to lessen discomfort and get good pictures.
- Don't wear deodorant during the test, as it may contain substances that can show up on the x-ray as white spots.
- Wear a skirt or pants so you only have to remove your top and bra.

SOURCES: American Cancer Society, Cleveland Clinic, American Institute for Cancer Research

MedBen
WellLiving®

1975 Tamarack Rd. • Newark, OH 43055 • (800) 423-3151 • www.medben.com