



## What is mammography and why is it important?

A mammogram is an x-ray of the breast which is used to look for breast disease. Screening mammograms are most often used to look for cancer in women who have no symptoms. Diagnostic mammograms are performed on patients who have findings on screening mammography or symptoms related to the breasts.

Having an annual screening mammogram is one of the best ways a woman can protect her health. This simple test can find breast cancers early, when they are easier to treat and chances of survival are higher. If you are 40 years of age or older, you should get a mammogram every year. Don't wait. Call us to schedule your appointment today.

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## Mammography

Understanding your exam

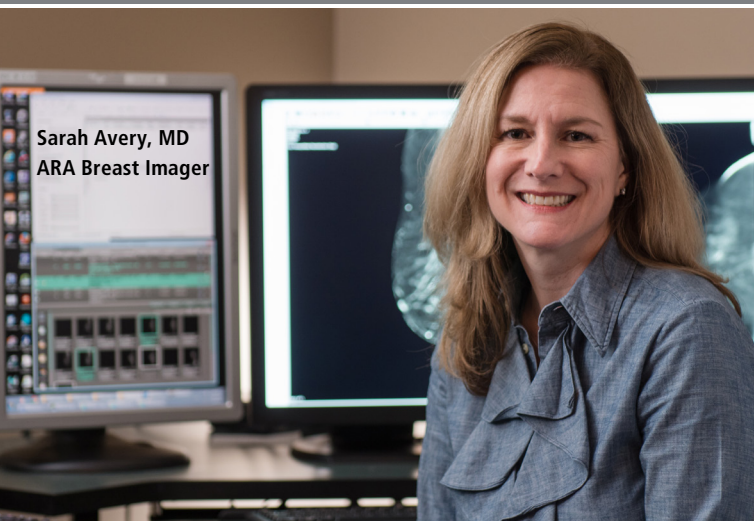


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Sarah Avery, MD  
ARA Breast Imager

### What is the difference between diagnostic and screening mammography?

If you are not having any breast symptoms such as a lump, nipple discharge or skin changes, and have no history of breast cancer, you should schedule a screening mammogram. If you are having problems or you are at a higher risk for breast cancer, you should talk to your doctor about the best approach. A diagnostic mammogram, which requires a referral form from your doctor, may be a better option for you.

### What does a mammogram feel like?

The mammogram requires your breasts to be compressed a few seconds for each X-ray. Although this will be slightly uncomfortable, it is necessary to ensure an accurate exam and the discomfort usually subsides quickly. Many women experience increased tenderness of the breasts prior to menstruation. If you typically experience tenderness, please avoid scheduling your mammogram prior to menstruation to minimize discomfort.

### How long will the exam take?

Please allow 20-30 minutes for a screening mammogram appointment. A diagnostic exam will take 30 minutes

to an hour. For a mammogram, you will undress above the waist and put on a robe. During a mammogram, the breast is compressed between two plates to help spread the breast tissue out and to reduce the chance of slight movements which can cause the image to blur. A registered female technologist will position your breast. The pressure lasts just a few seconds and is needed to obtain a good picture.

Sometimes supplementary mammography or ultrasound views are also requested. If this happens, do not be alarmed. About 1 in 10 women who get a mammogram will need more scans taken and most do not have breast cancer. Only 2 to 4 of every 1,000 screening mammograms lead to a diagnosis of breast cancer.

### Is the radiation I receive harmful?

Technological advances have reduced the radiation dose needed for mammography. The benefit of early diagnosis and treatment of breast cancer far outweighs the risk. The dose you receive from a mammogram is about the same as the average amount of radiation that you get from three months of background radiation. Our mammography facilities are accredited by the American College of Radiology.

### Who interprets my scan and when will I know the results of the exam?

Radiologists are medical doctors with postgraduate studies in radiology and often a subspecialty fellowship. An expert ARA radiologist will interpret your mammogram and send a written report to your physician. Your exam report will be posted on our patient portal within three business days and you will also receive a letter from ARA with your results within two to three weeks.

### How should I prepare?

- A physician referral is necessary for all diagnostic mammograms. Screening mammograms require a physician referral if you are under the age of 40. Please bring a copy to your appointment if necessary.

## 3D Mammography

3D mammography is an enhanced mammogram that allows radiologists to view inside the breast layer by layer. Multiple images, or "slices," are taken of different angles of the breast, revealing details that might be obscured by overlapping tissue. The experience of the exam is just like getting a standard mammogram except it takes a few seconds longer.

With 3D mammography as compared to traditional mammography, radiologists find more invasive breast cancers and fewer women get called back for additional imaging, cutting down on anxiety and expense.

Studies have shown that all patients can benefit from this revolutionary technology regardless of breast density or family history.

The amount of radiation used in a 3D mammogram is well within the FDA safety range and is safe and effective.

The State of Texas requires that insurance groups operating in state cover a yearly 3D screening mammogram for women 40 and older. ARA offers mammography in 14 of our 17 locations.



- If you have had a mammogram at an office other than ARA, please inform the scheduler or bring those images with you for comparison if possible.
- Wash breasts and underarms and do not apply any deodorant, powder or cream.
- Since you must undress from the waist up for the exam, you may wish to wear a two-piece outfit.

To schedule a 3D mammogram, please visit us at [ausrad.com/patient portal](https://ausrad.com/patient-portal).