

MAMMOGRAPHY

Mammography is the study of the breasts which helps detect possible abnormalities using very low dose X-rays. This procedure consists of radiographing each breast, face and profile, in order to visualize the entirety of the mammary gland.

The procedure, lasting for approximately 10 minutes, helps detect abnormalities such as opacities (i.e. tumors) or micro calcifications.

Mammography does not always provide a definitive diagnostic from the outset; it helps determine whether or not there is an abnormality in the breast, but it does not provide with certainty whether or not it is cancer. Other complementary procedures are necessary to establish such a diagnosis:

- Localized views (enlargement/compression)
- Breast ultrasound
- Tissue samples (biopsy)

Preparation

No preparation is necessary. However, it is essential that you bring films or CD's of your most recent mammogram and/or breast ultrasound if these were carried out in another center. This allows the radiologist to make a comparison and note any changes which have occurred since your last examination.

Do not apply antiperspirant or body cream on the day of the procedure.

Medical contraindication

Regarding screening mammograms, if you experience skin irritation under the breast prior to your appointment, it is recommended that you postpone it in order to allow the skin to heal. If the skin is indeed irritated, there may be risk of tearing under the breast.

Pregnancy is a contraindication of this procedure.

The mammography procedure (step by step)

- Upon arrival, we will ask you to complete a questionnaire, which in turn will be confirmed with you by a technician.
- During the exam, the technician will place the first breast in the mammogram, which will gradually be compressed. After checking the position of the breast, an X-ray is taken, at which point you will need to remain still and hold your breath. The breast is decompressed and the operation is repeated for the second breast.

- If you have breast implants and your appointment is for a basic mammogram, we will need to take 8 X-rays instead of 4. This is because a different technique is used in order to avoid the risk of rupturing the prostheses.

The immediate effects of the procedure

This very quick procedure may be uncomfortable due to the pressure exerted on the breast. This will vary depending on the patient's degree of sensitivity.

After the procedure

It often occurs that additional examinations are necessary. This, however, should not be a cause for concern, as these examinations are frequently performed to clarify routine images.

Your results will be sent to your attending physician, who will follow up if necessary.