

Tomosynthesis – 3D Breast Imaging

Mammograms are the best way to find breast cancer early. Regular mammograms give 2D pictures of the breast. Tomosynthesis uses 3D pictures to evaluate the breast. Any woman can benefit from tomosynthesis, but women with scattered fibroglandular tissue (breast density classification 2) and heterogeneously dense tissue (breast density classification 3) benefit the most from this type of test.

What is tomosynthesis?

- This test shows x-ray pictures of your breast in 3 dimensions.
- The x-ray machine moves in a semi-circle to take pictures of different sections, rather than one whole image of the breast.
- The pictures show 1mm thick sections and are high resolution like a C.T. scan.

Advantages of tomosynthesis?

- Research has shown that 3D mammography is better at finding cancer and often reduces the need for additional testing if a regular mammography shows an area of concern.

Why is tomosynthesis better than 2D mammography?

- The 2D pictures with regular mammography may have layers of tissue that cover each other and make it hard to see cancer.
- 2D images can make normal tissue look like cancer and give a false positive.
- 3D mammography prevents this problem by taking pictures of tissue in sections.

This handout is for informational purposes only. Talk with your doctor or health care team if you have any questions about your care.

What should I expect?

- Tomosynthesis will not feel any different than a 2D mammogram.
- The breast is compressed (squeezed) in the same way and the time to do the test is about the same as a regular mammogram.
- The x-ray tube moves in a semi-circle across the breast.
- This lets a series of low dose x-rays to be taken from different directions.

Warning Signs / Symptoms

The amount of radiation with tomosynthesis is slightly higher than 2D mammography, but it is still within guidelines.

Other Information

- Most insurance companies cover the cost of tomosynthesis. You will need to call your insurance company for information about your policy.
- Talk to your referring doctor about how to schedule an appointment or call 614-293-4455 or 800-240-4477.