

RADIOLOGY DEPARTMENT

Important Information for patients attending for Breast Imaging

Introduction

Breast clinic may ask for you to have a mammogram.

What happens during the examination?

Upon arriving in the breast imaging department please speak to the receptionist, who will find your paperwork and check you in.

The female mammographer will call you from the waiting room and walk you through to the examination room. She will ask you to come unaccompanied if possible, as the mammogram will be taken using x-rays (a type of radiation used in imaging the body). It is important that only the person needing the test is exposed to the x-rays.

You will be asked to undress to your waist. The mammographer will then place your breast onto the mammogram machine and lower a plastic plate onto the breast. The pressure is applied to the breast because:

- It improves the quality of the mammogram, making it more accurate and easier to interpret.
- It helps to keep your breast still so the picture isn't blurred.
- It reduces your dose of x-rays.

The mammographer will usually take two X-rays of each breast, one from above and one from the side. She will go behind a screen while the X-rays are taken. You will be asked to keep completely still for several seconds whilst the picture is taken. The mammogram usually takes approximately 10 minutes in total.

It can be uncomfortable, and sometimes women find it painful to have a mammogram. Each picture is taken within several seconds, and the discomfort should go away as soon as pressure on the breast is released. Sometimes the breasts can remain tender after the mammogram.

Please let your doctor or mammographer know if:

- You have breast implants. You will be able to have a mammogram but it will need to be done in a different way.
- You have had a mammogram within the last 6 months, or are pregnant or breastfeeding. Other tests may be performed prior to deciding to perform mammography.

Are there any benefits to having a mammogram?

The benefit of having mammography is the diagnosis of a possible breast cancer,

enabling further testing and ultimately the best treatment.

Are there any risks or side effects?

There are some risks to having mammography. These are

- It is unusual, but sometimes the breasts may bruise because of the mammogram.
- Rarely, the mammogram may be falsely reassuring and miss a cancer.
- There is a minimal risk that the x-rays used can cause breast cancer. It is estimated that for every 10,000 people who have a mammogram, 1 person will develop breast cancer because of the test.

Is there any preparation?

No specific preparation is required.

When will you get the results?

The Radiology Department will send a report of your mammogram to the doctor who requested, it immediately after the procedure.

Finally

It is each individual's decision whether to undergo a mammogram. Only you as the patient can weigh up the benefits against the risks and choose whether or not to have the mammogram if it is offered to you.

Some of your questions should have been answered by this letter, but remember that this is only a starting point for discussion about your treatment with the Doctors looking after you. If you are having trouble making a decision, please ask the doctor in clinic, or the mammographer for advice, but bear in mind that they cannot make the decision for you.

Access to Breast Imaging

How to find us:	West Outpatients entrance and follow the signs to Level 3 Breast Imaging (next to surgical outpatients). You can find more information at: www.nnuh.nhs.uk
Hospital transport:	If you are eligible for hospital transport, please telephone 0333 240 4100
Contact details:	Telephone: 01603 286435 Monday-Friday 8.30am-4pm. Email: radiology@nnuh.nhs.uk Website: http://www.nnuh.nhs.uk/departments/breast-imaging/

