



Mammogram Screening Options

Thank you for choosing InterMed for your mammogram. Regular mammogram screening is important for early detection of breast cancer and has been shown to reduce your chance of dying from breast cancer. Depending on your personal risk of breast cancer, there are pros and cons regarding at which age to begin mammograms and how frequently to do them. Your choice should be based on your personal preference after a discussion with your physician or primary care provider.

One of your options is a digital breast tomosynthesis or “3-D mammogram.” In this new type of mammogram, multiple images are combined by a computer to create a detailed, three-dimensional picture of the breast. The enhanced detail obtained during the test might improve breast cancer detection and reduce the need to return for additional, follow-up imaging.

While promising, this technology has not been proven to reduce breast cancer death rates as compared to conventional mammography. It is also more expensive and covered by most, but not all, insurance companies.

If you want your mammogram to include the tomosynthesis 3-D images, please alert the mammogram technologist.



Digital Breast Tomosynthesis

What is breast tomosynthesis?

Breast tomosynthesis, or “3-D mammogram”, is a newer technology that combines multiple images of the breast taken during a mammogram to create a more-detailed, three-dimensional picture of the breast.

Are the images different as a result?

In traditional mammograms, overlapping tissue can hide abnormalities, or make them more difficult to see. Sometimes these overlapping tissues appear as abnormalities. Either case may require additional tests to confirm there is no issue. The 3-D technology reduces the likelihood of uncertainty caused by overlapping tissue.

What are the benefits of tomosynthesis?

Studies suggest that tomosynthesis appears to increase the rate of detecting breast cancer, compared to conventional mammograms. It has been shown to reduce the need for additional tests after the initial mammogram.

Is the test done differently than a regular mammogram?

The positioning and procedure is the same as a conventional mammogram. The machine has the ability to do either conventional mammograms or 3-D images based on your preference. Unlike with a 2-D mammogram, a camera on the machine moves during the exam.

If it better detects cancer, shouldn't everyone have this type of mammogram?

There is no evidence that 3-D mammogram lowers the risk of breast cancer death, compared to conventional mammograms.

- It is likely some women who find breast cancer sooner — and receive earlier life-saving treatment — benefit from this early detection.
- There are also women who might have discovered that same cancer with conventional mammogram at a later time — and had the same successful treatment outcome.

(Continued on next page)

- Finally, some women may find an early cancer that might have never caused them a problem in their lifetime, something called overdiagnosis.

There is not enough information from population studies to know for sure how to balance all of these for individual patients.

Is the test associated with more radiation?

No. The machines at InterMed do not use any more radiation than conventional mammogram machines.

Does the test cost more?

Most insurance companies cover this service. If your insurance does not cover this type of mammogram, the estimated additional cost of the technical component is \$75. There would be an additional expense for the interpretation by the radiologist of \$100 - \$150.

Will InterMed submit the claim for this test to my insurance so I can get reimbursed if it is a covered procedure?

Yes, InterMed will process and forward paperwork from your mammogram to your insurance carrier.

I'm unsure if a 3-D mammogram is right for me. What should I do?

After reading this information, if you are still not sure which type of mammogram is best for you, we encourage you to do the test that was scheduled. You can speak with your physician or primary care provider about the options at your next appointment. After discussing the various options, your risk, comfort level, and recommendations of leading organizations, you'll be able to make an informed decision that's right for you.