

Wilmington Health Breast Imaging Mammography FAQ'S

1. What is digital mammography?

Wilmington Health offers state-of-the-art, digital mammography diagnostic services*. Our mammograms are completed by a well-trained, caring team. All are experienced in women's healthcare.

Our mammography machine offers innovative technology that includes:

- Shorter intervals between exposures
- Specially designed acquisition workstation integrated with X-ray exposure control

Our machine also uses patented new technology that provides top-quality mammography imaging.

2. Does a mammogram hurt?

During a mammogram, the breast is firmly compressed between two panels in order to produce a clear x-ray. This can lead to some temporary discomfort that lasts for only a few seconds.

Some women find this procedure more comfortable if they schedule a mammogram right after their period, when the breasts are less tender.

3. What should I expect during the mammogram?

The exam usually takes between 10 and 15 minutes. Once you have checked in for your appointment, there will be a short screening process in which you will be asked to complete several questions regarding your health history. You will then be taken to the mammography suite where you will meet the mammography technologist and be instructed on how to prepare for the exam.

During the exam, the mammography technologist will position you in front of the machine. We understand that this is a very delicate process, but please allow our technologists to position you appropriately and follow the directions she gives. Each imaging position will be duplicated on both breasts. Your technologist understands the need for you to feel comfortable while allowing her to obtain the best images possible. Please let her know if you experience more discomfort than you can withstand. Remember...it is only for a few quick seconds and may save your life!

- Breast compression is necessary in order to:
- Even-out the breast thickness so that all of the tissue can be visualized.
- Spread out the tissue so that small abnormalities won't be obscured.
- Allow use of a lower x-ray dose.
- Hold the breast still to eliminate blurring of the image caused by motion.

4. How do I schedule a Screening Mammogram?

Your Wilmington Health provider will order the mammography exam for you. One of their staff members will schedule the exam. Currently, we offer four locations for Mammography: 1202 Medical Center Dr, Mayfaire, Leland and Jacksonville. Please let the schedulers know which location works best for you.

- There are a few other things you should know before scheduling a Screening Mammogram:
 1. Wilmington Health can only perform mammograms on patients who are asymptomatic. If you are experiencing any problems (lumps, tenderness, pain, swelling, discharge, etc.), please inform the scheduler. You will be referred to your provider so that you and he/she may decide the next step for you.
 2. Wilmington Health can only perform mammograms on patients who are able to stand on their own.

You must be able to stand, without holding onto a walker (or any support device). This is for your safety.

5. May I have a mammogram if I am pregnant or breastfeeding?

Please tell the technologist if you are pregnant or possibly pregnant. You may choose to have the mammography exam completed, but you will be required to sign a pregnancy waiver (see attached). Wilmington Health would suggest that you wait until you know for certain that you are not pregnant before scheduling the exam.

If you are breastfeeding, you may still have the exam. Please ensure the breast milk is expelled immediately prior to the exam.

6. How will I receive the results of my mammogram?

Delaney Radiology will read your mammogram within 72 hours of the exam. The results are sent to your ordering provider. Normal results will be mailed to you at that point: you should receive these within 5 – 10 business days. Please ensure we have the correct mailing address on file.

If the radiologist recommends that you have additional imaging performed, you will be notified by telephone, within 48 hours of the exam (Friday exams will be notified on the following workday). This is completed by phone so that further evaluation can be completed as quickly as possible.

If you have not received your results within 7 business days, please contact the Mammography office where your exam was performed. Please do not assume the mammogram was normal.

7. What does it mean if I receive a call stating the radiologist has recommended additional imaging?

Please, do not panic if you receive a call from our staff explaining that you are asked to go for additional imaging. This does **not** mean you have cancer. The majority of “abnormal” mammograms are caused by benign (harmless) processes. This could be an area of thicker or denser breast tissue, a cyst or benign lump. When a mammogram detects a suspicious area, the patient is often advised to obtain additional imaging or even an ultrasound. Once the radiologist reads these additional images, you may be asked to see a breast surgeon or to have a biopsy performed.

At this time, if the radiologist recommends that you have additional imaging performed, we will send you to Delaney Radiology. They will contact you to schedule the appointment. If you prefer to have your diagnostic mammogram performed elsewhere, please let our mammography staff know, so they can assist you in the scheduling process.

8. What is the cost for a Screening Mammogram?

If you have major medical insurance, your Screening Mammogram may be covered at 100%. If you have questions, please contact your insurance carrier to find out more.

9. How often should I have a Mammogram?

Current guidelines from the American Cancer Society (ACS) and the American College of Radiology (ACR) recommend **screening mammography every year for women beginning at age 40**.

10. What are the risks of Mammography?

Mammography procedures do use radiation. There is a small risk of radiation side effects to the body. The amount of radiation that is administered in mammography is exceptionally low and is approved by national and international regulatory agencies as well as the National Department of Health and Human Services. The average radiation exposure from a mammogram is less than what one would receive as a passenger on a transcontinental jet flight. However, patients who are pregnant or may be pregnant are advised to notify their requesting practitioner and Radiology staff, because radiation can pose a risk to the developing fetus.

11. How should I prepare for a Mammography exam?

On the day of the exam:

1. Do not wear lotion, deodorant, or powder under your arms or breasts. These can produce artifacts on the images that may simulate calcifications or disease.
2. Tell the technologist of any problems you are experiencing.
3. Tell the technologist if you have breast implants.
4. The technologist will instruct you as to what clothing and jewelry must be removed. You will be given a cape that opens in the front.
5. There is one form you will complete upon your arrival for your appointment. It is a very short questionnaire regarding your health history.

12. If this is your first time having a Mammogram with Wilmington Health, but you have had mammograms at a different facility, please let our staff know where the prior mammograms were performed. We will attempt to obtain these images to have as a comparison for the images we take. If you have a disc with the images on it, please bring it with you to the exam.