



# MAMMOGRAPHY INFORMATION

Azienda Sanitaria Universitaria Giuliano Isontina

## **What is it?**

It is a particular X-ray of the breasts that uses a **very low dose of X-rays**, thanks to modern equipment and the particular sensitivity of the films used. It is possible to periodically perform mammograms, without significant risks because of the very low dose of X-rays. This allows you to repeat the examination even once a year, at **the age of 35** and over as appropriate. It does not cause pain, at most only a slight and momentary discomfort due to the delicate compression system on the breast that is necessary to obtain sharper and more precise images.

## **Why is it done?**

Mammography is the only method that allows to diagnose breast **neoplasms** even at a very early stage, when their treatment results in complete recovery. This technique makes it possible to identify tumours when they are still at an initial phase, sometimes a few millimetres in size, still not palpable or documented with other medical tests. Precisely due to the ability of mammography to diagnose very small tumours, it becomes the ideal and indispensable examination for the control of all women over 40, an age in which the risk of getting sick increases significantly.

## **Before the examination**

It is not necessary to observe particular precautions in the days preceding the examination. The phase of the menstrual cycle does not affect the quality of the images; however it is preferable to perform the mammography examination avoiding the periovulatory phase (mid cycle) and/or premenstrual phase if the breast is particularly painful in these periods. It is advisable to avoid the local use of any type of cosmetic, oil, cream and especially talc, in the hours preceding the exam.

Although mammography uses very low doses of X-rays, it **should not be**

**performed during pregnancy**, especially in the first trimester; therefore avoid the examination if it is not possible to safely exclude a possible pregnancy.

### **How it takes place**

The mammography examination is generally performed in an upright position, with naked breasts, resting one breast at a time on a special height-adjustable shelf. The device causes a slight compression on the gland which improves the quality of the mammographic image.

Normally two radiographs are performed for each breast with top-down and obliquely shots, for a complete view of the whole gland. The examination takes a few minutes and can also be completed by a clinical evaluation of the breast.

**After the examination, once the mammogram is completed, there are no signs or skin changes on the breasts and there is no recommendation to be observed in the following days, nor therapy to be done. In addition to the mammography, the radiologist sometimes requests an ultrasound examination, which is never a substitute, but complementary, because it is aimed at the radiographic images.**

**The mammography examination can be repeated every 1-2 years in women between the ages of 40 and 50 and annually after the age of 50, as prescribed by your general practitioner.**

Drafted by ASUGI's Communication, External Relations, Press Office, URP  
and based on the information provided by the Diagnostic Imaging Department

**Department of DIAGNOSTIC IMAGING**

Director: prof. Maria Assunta Cova

Revision 01 - May 2022