

## Questions and Answers about Breast Tomosynthesis (3D Mammography)

### What is Breast Tomosynthesis /3D mammography and how does it work?

Breast Tomosynthesis is a new tool that helps doctors find breast cancer early. It uses high powered computers to convert digital breast pictures into a stack of very thin layers. Together, these pictures create a 3D (three-dimensional) mammogram. Breast Tomosynthesis is used alongside standard digital mammography technology.

### What are the benefits of Breast Tomosynthesis?

#### ***Earlier and easier detection***

Breast Tomosynthesis gives the radiologist (a physician who reads mammograms) the best view of the breast tissue. It allows the radiologist to better see the location, size and shape of any abnormal tissue and it can help find very small cancers.

#### ***Fewer call backs***

After a regular digital screening mammogram, the radiologist may need to call a patient back for a second mammogram to get a better image of an area of concern. With Tomosynthesis, the quality of the breast images is more detailed than with a digital mammogram alone. This means that there are fewer women who will need to return for a second mammogram.

#### ***Less need for biopsy***

Because Breast Tomosynthesis provides images that are higher quality, the need to return for a biopsy is reduced.

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***At the Herman & Walter Samuelson Breast Care Center, we believe that Tomosynthesis/3D Mammography provides patients with the highest quality mammogram available today.***

  
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### Am I a candidate for Breast Tomosynthesis?

At the Herman & Walter Samuelson Breast Care Center at Northwest Hospital, we offer Breast Tomosynthesis to all patients. It is considered the best type of mammogram available today, and can be used for both screening and diagnostic mammograms. It is particularly beneficial for patients who are at high risk for breast cancer, who have dense breast tissue or who have a family history of breast cancer.

### What are the risks of Breast Tomosynthesis?

The 3D mammogram exposes patients to a small amount of radiation in addition to that of their regular digital mammograms. The total amount of radiation is still safely below the American College of Radiology guidelines. The benefits of the technology outweigh the risks, and the Food and Drug Administration approved Breast Tomosynthesis for patient use in 2011.

### Can I choose not to have this exam?

You and your health care provider will decide if Breast Tomosynthesis is an option you would like to have in addition to your regular digital mammogram.

### What should I expect during the exam?

The 3D mammogram will be taken at the same time as your regular digital mammogram. The 3D X-ray arm will move above your breast to get a picture. The process lasts only a few seconds longer than with digital mammography alone.

### How much will I pay for this exam?

Currently, some health insurance companies do not cover Breast Tomosynthesis. However, because we believe that this new technology will help many patients, we are offering it **free** to all of our patients. As always, we will submit the costs of your regular mammogram to your insurance company.