

*The Knoxville Comprehensive Breast Center Breast Health Library has been designed to give you more information about breast health issues. If you have additional questions after you read this brochure, please be sure to ask a Breast Health Nurse Specialist.*

## **COMPRESSION**

Many patients have asked why there has to be so much compression for a mammogram. The issue of compression is a sensitive one. Here are some facts to keep in mind:

- ❖ Compression spreads out normal breast tissue, enabling the Clinical Breast Radiologist to detect smaller lumps.
- ❖ Compression immobilizes the breast, resulting in exquisite detail on the mammogram again enabling the Clinical Breast Radiologist to identify the smallest abnormalities related to an early cancer.
- ❖ Compression decreases the thickness of the breast, which results in an even smaller dose of radiation.
- ❖ Compression helps in pulling the breast tissue forward away from the chest wall, resulting in a mammogram which includes the maximum amount of breast tissue. Breast cancer can hide deep in the breast.

If it is not included in the mammogram, the Clinical Breast Radiologist won't see it!

❖ Compression may result in brief discomfort, but no matter how uncomfortable you may feel, it does not damage the breast tissue.

We realize that many of our patients have breast tenderness which can be increased with the mammogram. We make the following recommendation:

- ❖ Schedule your mammogram for the week following your menstrual cycle; the time when breast tenderness is normally the least.
- ❖ If you have severe, unremitting tenderness, take Tylenol or ibuprofen just before your arrival.
- ❖ Please inform the Mammography Technologist if you are very uncomfortable while she is positioning the breast for the mammogram. You are in control in how much compression is utilized. Our Mammography Technologists are very sensitive to your discomfort and will strive to minimize any discomfort you have while performing your mammogram.

Bruising is an unusual but known complication of mammography, and tends to occur more frequently in elderly patients with fragile blood vessels in the skin;

this is not detrimental to the breasts. Remember that compression, no matter how uncomfortable it may be, does not damage the breasts.

We appreciate our patients' willingness to undergo an annual examination for early detection of breast cancer, and we want to work closely with you to make that experience as comfortable as possible.

**Mammography and  
Examinations by a Physician**

Breast cancer affects almost as many women in their forties as it does women fifty and over. As a result, the American Cancer Society has revised its screening guidelines. The current recommendations are:

**Yearly mammograms are recommended starting at age 40 and continuing for as long as a woman is in good health.**

**Women at high risk should get a Breast MRI and a mammogram every year. Women at moderately increased risk or having a dense mammographic pattern should have breast ultrasound along with their yearly mammogram.**

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[www.knoxvillebreastcenter.com](http://www.knoxvillebreastcenter.com)

**KCBC'S**

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**COMPRESSION**

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