

Annual Screening Mammography and the COVID-19 Vaccine



It is important to get an annual screening mammogram on time, even if you recently had a vaccination.

- A small number of patients may develop swollen lymph nodes in the few weeks after any vaccine including the COVID-19 vaccine.
- Swollen lymph nodes may show on the mammogram, but this should not delay your annual screening.

Your mammogram provider will ask you when and in which arm you received your vaccine and will take this in consideration when reviewing your results.

Should I have my annual screening?

Yes, it is important to take care of yourself! Annual screening has been shown to reduce deaths due to breast cancer early when treatment is more effective and less harmful.

When should I schedule my screening mammogram?

You should schedule your mammogram every year, on time, without delay. If possible, plan to receive your mammogram 4 or more weeks after your COVID-19 vaccine. This reduces the chance that swollen lymph nodes from the vaccine will appear on your mammogram. But remember, the breast radiologist will take into account any swelling they may see.

Should I reschedule my screening mammogram or reschedule my COVID-19 vaccine appointment?

Keep your screening mammogram appointment and keep your COVID-19 vaccination appointments. Getting vaccinated is critical to slow the spread of COVID-19. Regular screening mammograms ensure that breast cancer can be detected as early as possible. Both are very important to ensure that you stay healthy.

What happens if there are swollen lymph nodes on my mammogram?

Breast radiologists look closely for any changes on your mammogram. Swollen lymph nodes under one arm can be an uncommon sign of breast cancer.

Depending on your medical history and when you received your vaccine, the breast radiologist may recommend a short follow-up exam to allow the lymph nodes to return to normal size.

How early can I get my screening mammogram?

It is recommended that you get your screening mammogram every year. Most insurances allow for a screening every calendar year, so you can get it sooner than 365 days from your last one. If you choose to have your screening earlier, 8-9 months from your last one is OK. Just check with your insurance provider to be sure.

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Annual Screening Mammography and the COVID-19 Vaccine (Continued)



Why is early detection so important?

Early detection with mammography not only saves lives but also reduces the severity of treatment that women with breast cancer must undergo. Studies demonstrate that women whose breast cancers are found with screening mammography are less likely to have more intensive treatment such as a mastectomy or chemotherapy. There are 30-40% fewer deaths due to breast cancer among women screened with mammography than those who do not undergo screening.

Will I be charged for follow-up exams?

Check with your insurance provider to be sure. The additional tests most often done include:

- **#77065** Mammography, unilateral
- **#77066** Mammography, bilateral
- **#76642** Breast Ultrasound
- **#77061** Digital Breast Tomosynthesis; unilateral
- **#77062** Digital Breast Tomosynthesis; bilateral

My doctor said I need to come in for a follow-up. Should I be worried?

Absolutely not. This does not always mean there is a problem. For some, a four-view mammography is not enough to fully examine breast tissue. Special mammography images such as spot views and/or ultrasounds are sometimes needed to make sure breast tissue is normal.

What if I have other breast problems?

If you have any changes in your breast or underarm, such as pain or a lump, contact your care provider. You should not delay important care.



Schedule your annual mammogram! Let your provider know when and in which arm you received the vaccine.

In accordance with guidance from the Society of Breast Imaging.