

Should You Start Breast Cancer Screening (Mammogram) at Age 40 or 45?

Understanding Breast Cancer and Mammograms

Breast cancer is a disease in which cells in the breast grow out of control. (You may refer to this part of your body as top or chest.)

A mammogram is a low-dose digital X-ray of your breast. It uses very little radiation to get an image of your breast tissue.

The way mammograms are performed is changing from 2-D to 3-D. Three-dimensional (3-D) mammography provides higher quality images using low-dose digital X-rays.

3-D mammography:

- has a higher rate of finding cancer
- decreases your chance of having to go back for more tests, which means fewer:
 - “false-positive” results (This means that there is an abnormal area but it isn’t cancer.)
 - invasive testing procedures, such as a biopsy or surgery
- can provide more detailed images of the breast if you have dense breast tissue or breast implants.

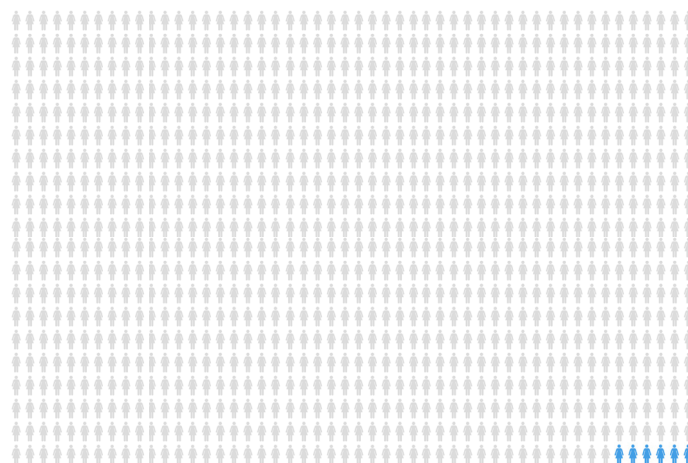
During a mammogram, your breast is compressed between two panels for a few seconds so the X-ray can get a clear image of your breast tissue.

You will have at least 2 images taken of each breast. The appointment will take about 20 minutes.

Risk of developing breast cancer

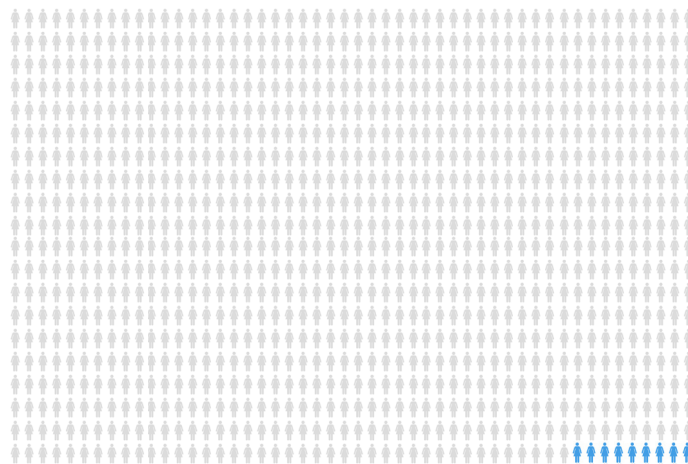
The risk of developing breast cancer is lower at ages 40 - 44 and higher at ages 45 - 49.

Ages 40 Through 44



About 6 in 1,000 women* between ages 40 - 44 will develop breast cancer.

Ages 45 Through 49



About 9 in 1,000 women* between ages 45 - 49 will develop breast cancer.

*females at birth

Your Screening Schedule

When to start having mammograms is a personal decision. It should be based on:

- the benefits and risks of having mammograms
- your risk of developing breast cancer
- your values and preferences.

Together, you and your health care provider will decide when mammograms are right for you.

Allina Health Screening Recommendations for Women at Average Risk for Breast Cancer

Allina Health's mammogram screening guidelines are based on the 2015 American Cancer Society recommendations:

- **Ages 40 to 44:** Should consider having a mammogram every year with your decision informed by a shared decision making process with your health care provider. During this process, they will explain the benefits and harms of screening.
- **Ages 45 to 54:** Have a mammogram every year.
- **Age 55 and older:** Have a mammogram every year or transition to having one every 2 years. Continue to have mammograms as long as your health is good.

Your doctor may recommend a different schedule if you have a **higher than average risk** for breast cancer.

Benefits and Risks of Mammograms

Benefits

- Mammograms help women find breast cancer in early stages. This may:
 - give you more choices for your treatment
 - improve your chance of survival. A mammogram is the only screening test that has been shown to increase the chance of surviving breast cancer.

Important

Tell your health care provider if you have changes in your breasts such as:

- a lump or thickening in your breast or underarm area
- a dimple in the skin of your breast or a nipple turned inward into your
- a change in one of your breast's size or appearance
- nipple discharge (fluid) that is not related to breastfeeding.



A mammogram machine compresses your breast between two panels for a few seconds so the X-ray can get a clear image of your breast tissue.

Risks

- During and after the mammogram, you may have short-term discomfort, such as sore or tender breasts.
- Mammograms may find something that looks like cancer but is not cancer. One in 12 women will need an additional mammogram or a procedure to confirm they do not have cancer. This is called a false-positive result.
Call your insurance provider to learn about possible out-of-pocket costs for this extra testing.
- Mammograms may find breast cancer that will not cause health problems. You may receive breast cancer treatment that is not needed. This is called overdiagnosis.
No single test can tell for sure if breast cancer will or will not cause health problems. As a result, how often overdiagnosis occurs is not known. Research indicates it is rare.

Risks for Developing Breast Cancer

Certain risks increase your chance of having breast cancer. There are some risks you can control and others you cannot control.

Check the box in the chart (at right) for each risk that applies to you.

Important: If you have a higher than average risk for breast cancer, your health care provider may recommend a different screening schedule than the one listed on page 2.

	Risks for Developing Breast Cancer	Notes
<input type="checkbox"/>	female at birth	These are the two greatest risks for getting breast cancer. The majority of all breast cancers occur in women (females at birth) who have no other risks. Your risk of getting breast cancer increases as you get older.
<input type="checkbox"/>	age 40 or older	
<input type="checkbox"/>	history of breast cancer in your family (mother, grandmother, aunt, sister, brother or uncle)	This increases your risk of getting breast cancer.
<input type="checkbox"/>	member(s) of your family developed breast cancer before age 40	Tell your health care provider the age that your family member(s) found out they had breast cancer.
<input type="checkbox"/>	dense breasts	Your breast density is based on how dark or light your breast tissue is on a mammogram. If you have dense breasts, you may have a slightly higher risk of getting breast cancer.
<input type="checkbox"/>	had radiation therapy to your chest	This increases your risk of getting breast cancer.
<input type="checkbox"/>	being obese	A body mass index (BMI) of 30 or more is linked to an increased risk of cancer.

Talk with your health care provider about your risk level.

Health Insurance

Most insurance companies cover the cost of mammograms. Your health care provider's recommendation does not guarantee coverage by your insurance provider.

Call your insurance provider to see if your plan covers mammograms and how much you have to pay (out of pocket).

Call the American Cancer Society at 1-800-227-2345 to learn about free and low-cost mammograms if you have little or no insurance.

Comparing My Options

Check your preference for each item as you decide what is most important to you. This may help guide your decision about which age to start mammogram screening.

	Important Part of My Decision	Not an Important Part of My Decision	My Preferences
<p>False-positives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — It is more common for younger women to have false-positive results. — You may need another mammogram or procedure to confirm you do not have cancer. 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> age 40 <input type="checkbox"/> age 45
<p>Overdiagnosis:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Starting screening mammograms at age 40 or 45 will not affect the rare overdiagnosis issue. 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> age 40 <input type="checkbox"/> age 45
<p>Dense breasts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Breast tissue in younger women is more dense. This can make finding breast cancer more difficult. — You may need another mammogram to look more closely at your breast if the mammogram shows an area of concern. 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> age 40 <input type="checkbox"/> age 45
<p>Radiation exposure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — There is no scientific evidence of risk of developing breast cancer from a screening mammogram. 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> age 40 <input type="checkbox"/> age 45
<p>Early discovery and treatment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — The earlier breast cancer is found, survival chances improve. 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> age 40 <input type="checkbox"/> age 45
<p>Family history of breast cancer:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — If you have a mother, sister, grandmother, brother or uncle who had breast cancer, you may want to start screening at age 40. 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> age 40 <input type="checkbox"/> age 45