What is 3D mammography?

Digital breast tomosynthesis (tomo), also known as 3D mammography, is a revolutionary new screening and diagnostic breast imaging tool to improve the early detection of breast cancer. During the 3D part of the exam, an x-ray arm sweeps over the breast, taking multiple images in seconds. Images are displayed as a series of thin slices that can be viewed by our radiologists as individual images or in a dynamic interactive animation. 3D mammography is used in combination with 2D digital mammography.

What are the benefits of using 3D mammography?

Many studies in Europe and the U.S. have substantiated superior breast cancer detection rates when combining 3D mammography with conventional 2D mammography. Studies have demonstrated a 10%-30% increase in overall breast cancer detection (over 2D imaging alone). **This ability to detect breast cancer at an earlier stage will save more lives.** Two of the top benefits are improving the early detection of breast cancer and providing peace of mind due to greater clarity and accuracy. This increased accuracy reduces the number of call-backs (by as much as 30%), sparing women the anxiety, inconvenience and expense of coming back for further imaging.

How is 3D mammography different than 2D?

Traditional digital mammography takes two-dimensional pictures of the breast and is still one of the most advanced tools available for detecting breast abnormalities. But rather than viewing the breast tissue in 2D images, our radiologists can examine the tissue one thin layer at a time, in a sense traveling through the structure of the breast like flipping pages of a book. Fine details are more visible and are less likely to be hidden by overlapping tissue.

Is there increased radiation with 3D mammography?

3D mammography is safe. Radiation exposure to the breast is very low. The radiation dose for a combined 2D/3D mammography exam is well below the acceptable limits defined by the FDA, and is only a fraction of the level of radiation everyone receives annually from being outdoors. There is no evidence that this low level of radiation has any significant affect on the breasts.

What can patients expect during a 3D mammogram?

3D mammography complements standard 2D mammography. No additional breast compression is required and it only takes a few more seconds. The experience will be very similar to mammograms patients have had in the past .

As is typical with any mammogram exam, some women experience minor discomfort and others experience no discomfort at all.

Is 3D mammography safe for women with breast implants?

Yes. Mammography, both 2D and 3D, is safe for women with breast implants. Most breast implants are designed to withstand hundreds of pounds of pressure. A mammogram generates an average of 20 lbs. of pressure.