

Having a mammogram

This leaflet explains what happens during a mammogram examination in the Radiology (X-ray) Department at the Royal Berkshire Hospital.

A radiographer (X-ray practitioner) will carry out the mammogram.

Introduction

- Please telephone and let us know if you have limited mobility and are unable to stand, as you will need a longer appointment time for the X-ray.
- Please telephone and let us know if you have implants, as you will need a longer appointment time for the X-ray.
- Please bring your appointment letter or your X-ray request card with you.
- The radiographer who will carry out the examination will greet you in the waiting area.
- A relative or friend may accompany you to your appointment; however, no childcare facilities are available.

What is a mammogram?

A mammogram is an X-ray examination of the breast that is carried out using purpose-built specialised equipment. The examination will take between 10 and 15 minutes. A female radiographer who is specially trained in mammography will carry out the examination.

Why do I need a mammogram?

- You may have been seen by the hospital breast consultant following a referral by your GP and a mammogram may have been requested to provide additional information for the consultant.
- You may have been referred for a mammogram on the family history pathway.
- Alternatively, you may have been invited for a mammogram as part of the National Breast Screening Programme. The Breast Screening Department will automatically invite women to attend for a mammogram when they reach the age stipulated by the programme.

What happens during the mammogram?

- We will ask you to undress to the waist and stand up close to the machine. The radiographer will position your breast so it is pressed tightly by a perspex plate lowered onto the breast. This may be slightly uncomfortable but should not be painful.
- The pressure by the plate is essential to get detailed pictures, and is held for only a few seconds while the X-ray is taken. Pictures are usually taken with the breast in two different positions. Additional views are required if you have breast implants.
- We will ask you to wait while the radiographer checks the films to make sure that all the breast tissue is seen clearly.

Are there any risks with this test?

- The radiation is kept to a very low dose and this is because the breast is made up of soft tissue only.
- Please tell the radiographer if the skin underneath your breast is sore or red, so we can take extra care.

After the mammogram

- You will have no long-lasting effects from having a mammogram.
- You may have a slight redness to the skin as a result of the applied pressure, but this will disappear very quickly.
- You may also feel some tenderness, which may be reduced by taking your usual pain relief.

Results

- A report of your examination will be sent to your referring doctor; your GP will receive a copy of the report.
- If you have been invited by the Breast Screening Programme, your GP will be sent your results and you will also receive a copy. You will receive another invitation for breast screening in a further three years.
- If you need to return for a further consultation, you will receive a letter with an appointment.

Further information

www.nhs.uk/Conditions/breast-cancer-screening/Pages/what-happens.aspx

www.cancerscreening.nhs.uk/breastscreen/publications/ia-02.html

To find out more about our Trust visit www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk

Please ask if you need this information in another language or format.

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Radiology Department, November 2021

Next review due: November 2023

Breast screening services

West Berkshire Screening Service (Reading)

Contact us

Address

21a Craven Road

Reading

Berks

RG1 5LE

[Get directions \(opens in Google Maps\)](#)

Phone

0118 322 8282

About breast screening

Screening units do not offer drop-in screening on request. Breast screening for women aged 50-70 is by appointment only. Invitations for screening are sent automatically to women up until their 71st birthday. Women aged 71 or over can contact their breast screening unit to make an appointment every 3 years. Women with breast symptoms should see their GP.

This information was supplied by NHS breast screening (BSP) programme on 3 November 2023.