

Mammography on the augmented/implant breast

Other formats

If you need this information in another format such as audio CD, Braille, large print, high contrast, British Sign Language or translated into another language, please contact the PALS desk on 01271 314090 or at ndht.pals@nhs.net.

What is a mammogram?

A mammogram is an x-ray examination which involves compression of your breasts in order to obtain good quality images. These images can be used to detect and evaluate breast changes.

Why is it needed?

The specialist in the Breast Clinic has asked us to carry out this test. Like any medical test, mammograms are often helpful but they are not 100% accurate and will not detect every problem in the breast. A mammogram that appears to be normal can never guarantee there is no problem such as breast cancer. Whatever the result of the mammogram, it is important to continue self-examination and to report any changes to your own doctor.

Are mammograms on breast implants different?

Mammograms on breast implants are different because the x-rays cannot see through the implant. We therefore plan to take two additional x-rays in order to see as much breast tissue as possible.

If you know the type of implant you have, please tell the radiographer as this will help her to decide which extra views she might need to do.

What does it involve?

Prior to the examination, a female radiographer will explain the examination, and will ask you to sign a consent form to allow us to undertake the procedure.

The radiographer will ask you to partly undress and remove your bra. To make this easier, it is advisable to wear separates rather than all-in-one underwear. You will be asked to stand next to the X-ray machine.

The breast is held firmly between two plastic plates and x-rays are taken; the pressure applied to the implant will only be minimal. We need to apply some pressure to reduce the radiation dose to your breast and to ensure good image quality.

Some women find the examination uncomfortable and a few say it is painful particularly if the breasts are tender.

How long will it take?

The mammogram should only take about 15 minutes. Sometimes an ultrasound scan may be needed to help us understand the films. We may be able to offer this at the time of the mammogram, but sometimes a further appointment will be needed.

Where is it done?

Mammograms are performed in the mammography room, which is situated in the Ultrasound Department in X-ray A (Radiology) on Level 2.

There is parking available in the visitor's car park at the hospital and disabled parking is signposted.

Access for the disabled is available via the main reception of the hospital.

What preparations are needed?

Before you attend for your mammogram, please let us know if you have had any previous mammograms performed at another hospital or screening centre, by phoning 01271 322741 between 9am and 5pm. If we have your previous mammograms, we can compare the images and this will ensure that your specialist gets a report as soon as possible. If you suspect any problems with your implants, please let us know as mammography may not be an appropriate test.

On the day of your mammogram, please do not use a spray deodorant or talcum powder as this may show up on your mammogram. You can use roll-on deodorant.

What about my general health?

Please let the radiographer know:

- If you are pregnant or breastfeeding
- If your breasts are very tender and/or you have had a recent operation or needle biopsy.

Prior to your appointment, it is also useful to know:

- If you have reduced mobility or shoulder problems – we can allow more time for your appointment.
- If your breasts are particularly painful at certain times of the month – we may be able to change the appointment to a different time.

How will I feel during the test?

There may be some minimal discomfort when the compression is applied.

How will I feel afterwards?

There should be no problems after the mammogram but the radiographer will ask you to check and confirm that your breasts feel as they did before the compression was applied.

What happens after the test?

You can go home after the mammogram unless you have an appointment to see the specialist on the same day in the outpatient department.

Are there any risks?

There may be a small risk of rupturing the implants as a result of compressing the breast, although currently there is no evidence to support this. Please tell us if you have any concerns with your implant before we start the examination.

Follow up

The results are sent to your hospital specialist. Sometimes there may be a delay in issuing the report if images have to be obtained from another hospital for comparison or if the images have to be sent off for a second opinion.

Further information

If you wish to discuss any concerns regarding your appointment or if you have any questions, please call 01271 311678 and ask to speak to one of the mammographers.

Reference

Public Health England Breast Screening: Breast Implant Guidelines

PALS

The Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) ensures that the NHS listens to patients, relatives, carers and friends, answers questions and resolves concerns as quickly as possible. If you have a query or concern call 01271 314090 or email ndht.pals@nhs.net. You can also visit the PALS and Information Centre in person at North Devon District Hospital, Barnstaple.

Have your say

Northern Devon Healthcare NHS Trust aims to provide high quality services. However, please tell us when something could be improved. If you have a comment or compliment about a service or treatment, please raise your comments with a member of staff or the PALS team in the first instance.

'Care Opinion' comments forms are on all wards or online at www.careopinion.org.uk.

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