Benefits vs Risks of 3D Mammography™

What are the benefits?
3D Mammography™ allows the doctor to better see the different structures as well as the location, size and shape of any abnormal tissue. This allows more cancers to be found at earlier stages when they are more treatable and also reduces the chance of a false positive exam resulting in additional imaging.

What are the risks?
The amount of radiation is below the American College of Radiology guidelines and is just slightly higher than the digital 2D mammography alone. Breast tomosynthesis is approved by the Food and Drug Administration.

Early Detection Can Save Lives
Schedule your Mammogram Today

1. Go to www.raleighrad.com to request your screening mammogram.
2. Call one of our facilities and our schedulers will be happy to assist you.

Raleigh Radiology offers 3D Mammography™ at most locations. For more information, or to schedule your mammogram online, visit www.raleighrad.com

Weekend hours available.
Visit www.raleighrad.com/locations for hours by location.

Raleigh Radiology has pledged to put our patients’ safety, health, and welfare first by optimizing imaging examinations to use only the radiation necessary to produce diagnostic quality images. At Raleigh Radiology, we image wisely. To find out more, visit www.imagewisely.org/Pledge.aspx
The Importance of Breast Density

What is 3D Mammography™
3D Mammography™, also known as breast tomosynthesis, converts images into thin layers building what is essentially a “three dimensional mammogram”. Now, radiologists can see breast tissue in a way never before possible. With the traditional mammogram, the radiologists view the complexities of the breast in a flat image. With 3D Mammography™, breast tissue is viewed in thin, 1 millimeter slices. Details are more clearly visible, no longer hidden by overlapping tissue.

How often should I get screened?
Women are encouraged to have a baseline mammogram between the ages of 35-39, and begin annual exams at age 40. Screening mammography should be used in conjunction with a clinical breast exam performed by your physician.

The 3D Mammography™ Exam
A tomosynthesis exam is similar to a traditional 2D mammogram. Breasts are under compression while the x-ray arm of the machine makes a quick arc over the breast, taking a series of images at a number of angles. All images are viewed by the technologist to ensure they have adequate images for review by a radiologist. The exam time should be approximately the same as that of a traditional mammogram.

Are there additional costs?
Most insurance plans cover 3D Mammography™ charge, in addition to the 2D portion of your mammography exam. Check with your insurance to see if it is a covered benefit with your policy.

What is breast density?
Breasts are made up of a mixture of fibrous and glandular tissue and fatty tissue. Dense breasts contain a lot of fibrous or glandular tissue but not much fat. Density may decrease with age, but there is little, if any, change in most women.

Why is breast density important?
Breast density is not a major cancer risk factor. However, sensitivity to mammography is reduced as density increases making it harder to identify abnormalities within the breast. It would be a benefit for women with dense breasts to complete a risk assessment with their physician. It is a good starting point in the discussion of whether supplemental tests will be beneficial and what tests, if any, to order.

If I have dense breasts, do I still need a mammogram?
Yes, Mammography is the only screening tool that has been demonstrated through large randomized trials to lower breast cancer mortality. Also, mammography is the only test that can reliably detect suspicious calcifications. Such calcifications are often the first sign of in-situ cancers, which co-exist with otherwise invisible, invasive cancers. Other screening options are available, but should be considered in addition to regular screening mammography.

Do I have dense breasts?
Breast density is determined by the radiologist who reads your mammogram. There are four categories of mammographic density. The radiologist assigns each mammogram to one of the categories. Your doctor should be able to tell you whether you have dense breasts based on where you fall on the density scale. (See scale to the right)

What should I do if I have dense breasts?
What if I don’t?
If you have dense breasts, please talk to your doctor. Together you can decide which, if any, additional screening exams are right for you. If your breasts are not dense, other factors may still place you at increased risk for breast cancer - including a family history of the disease, previous chest radiation treatment for cancer and previous breast biopsies that show you are high risk. Talk to your doctor and discuss your history. Even if you are at low risk, and you have entirely fatty breasts, you should still get an annual mammogram starting at age 40.

Are there other screening options for women with dense breasts?
Among the additional tests that are available, screening breast MRI and 3D tomosynthesis are impacted less by breast density in their ability to detect cancer than 2D mammography alone.