

Healthy Living

Breast cancer screening FAQ

Preventive health care emphasizes healthy lifestyle choices like eating a nutritious, well-balanced diet and avoiding a sedentary lifestyle. Screening for various diseases, including cancer, is another important component of preventive health care that encourages individuals to be proactive in relation to their overall health.

Women may hear about breast cancer screening as early as adolescence. Despite that, it's not uncommon for women of all ages to have questions about breast cancer screening.

When should breast cancer screening begin?

This is not a one-size-fits-all answer. The American Cancer Society advises women at aver-

age breast cancer risk to begin screening between the ages of 40 and 44. Women are considered at average risk if they have no personal history or strong family history of breast cancer. Women also are considered at average risk if they do not have gene mutations linked to breast cancer or a history of chest radiation ther-

apy prior to age 30. While the ACS notes women at average risk have the option to begin screening prior to age 44, the organization advises women to schedule annual mammograms beginning at age 45 and to continue getting them through age 54. If screenings do not show anything by age 54, women can then choose to get a mammo-

gram every other year beginning at age 55.

What is a 3D mammogram?

3D mammography is a relatively new screening option that has piqued many women's curiosity in recent years. Brown University Health reports that a 3D mammogram rotates in an arc and takes X-rays of the breast at different angles, ultimately producing a more detailed view of the breast for radiologists to examine. By contrast, a 2D mammogram takes single X-rays at two different angles. But the ACS notes many breast imaging centers do not have 3D mammography. If given the choice between a 2D mammogram or none at all, women should always get the 2D mammogram. If 3D imaging is available, then that might be the way to go, as Brown University Health notes 3D mammography tends to detect more cancers and produce fewer false positives.

Are mammograms fool-proof?

While mammograms are highly effective at detecting

breast cancer, they are not perfect. The O'Neal Cancer Center notes that dense breast tissue can make breast cancer detection more difficult. Because no screening is perfect, it's imperative that women adhere to screening guidelines even if results are consistently negative and they do not feel anything unusual during self-examinations.

Screening for cancer is an integral component of preventive health care. Women are urged to make breast cancer screening part of their routine.

October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month

It's time to prioritize your health and take action.

At Mount Nittany Health, we offer a comprehensive range of services, from advanced diagnostic imaging to surgery, oncology and recovery care. Our state-of-the-art 3D mammography technology delivers a clearer, more precise view of breast tissue, aiding in earlier cancer detection and minimizing unnecessary follow-up appointments.

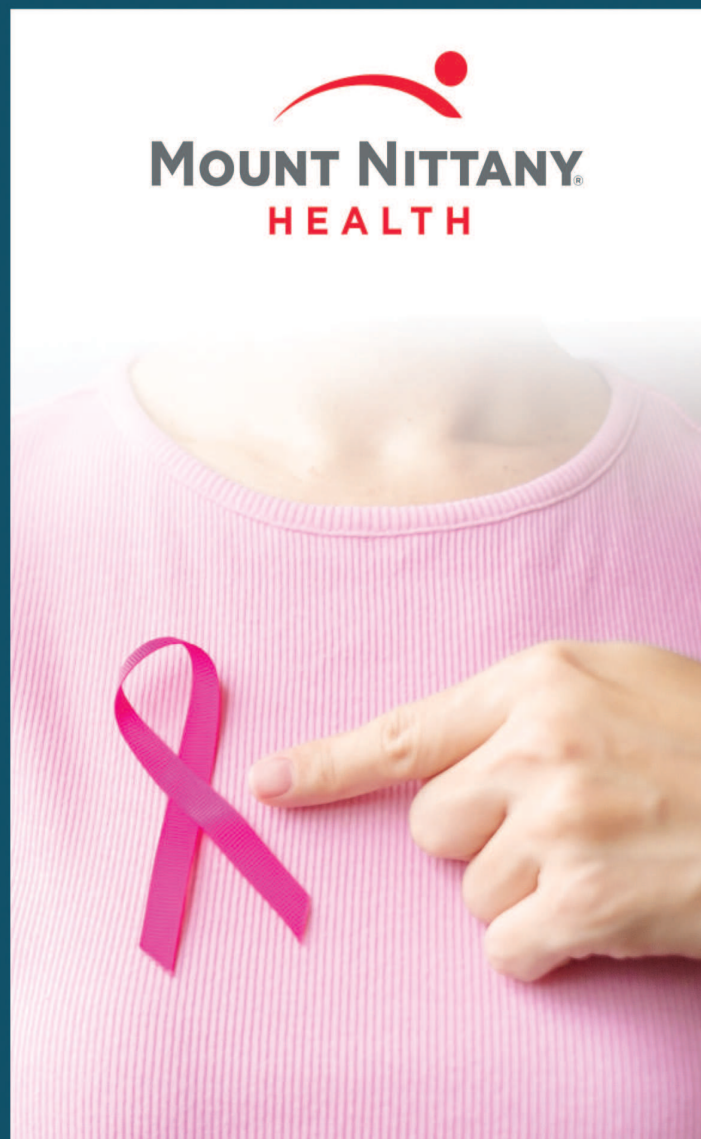
If it's been a year since your last screening mammogram, now is the time to schedule — appointments are available at Mount Nittany Health.

If a cancer diagnosis is made, you won't navigate it alone. Our Oncology Patient Navigators stand by your side to streamline your care, connect you with helpful resources and provide support for your physical, emotional and daily needs — all at no charge to you.

What you can do today:
Conduct a self-breast exam.

Familiarize yourself with how your breasts typically look and feel. Routine self-checks can help you detect changes sooner. Should you notice a lump, thickened tissue or any unusual differences, reach out to your healthcare provider promptly.


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