

- You are pregnant or breast feeding.
- You need an interpreter: We will organise this for you.

**Patient Transport** will only be made available if you have a medical/clinical need. Referrals are via GP, surgery, ward or other clinical areas within the Trust.

**Public Transport and Travel Information** details are available from: <https://tfl.gov.uk/tube-dlr-overground/status/>

#### Patient advice and liaison service (PALS)

If you have a compliment, complaint or concern please contact our PALS team on 020 7288 5551 or [whh-tr.whitthealthPALS@nhs.net](mailto:whh-tr.whitthealthPALS@nhs.net)

If you need a large print, audio or translated copy of this leaflet please contact us on 020 7288 3182. We will try our best to meet your needs.

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## Having a Mammogram

### A patient's guide



### **What is a mammogram?**

A mammogram is an X-ray of the breasts and is used to detect the presence of breast diseases such as cancer. At the Whittington Hospital you may have a mammogram if you have been referred to our breast clinic with symptoms or if you are being monitored after having breast cancer treatment.

### **Preparation for a mammogram**

There are no special preparations for a mammogram. You can eat, drink and take medication as normal beforehand. However, we request that you avoid wearing deodorant, moisturiser or talcum powder to the appointment. You can bring these items with you to apply after your appointment is complete.

If you are attending via the Breast Clinic you may be at the hospital for several hours so please consider this when arranging childcare or time off work. Local parking is limited so you may wish to take advantage of our excellent local transport links.

If you are attending for an annual routine appointment you can usually expect to leave the hospital within the hour.

### **What does a mammogram involve?**

Your mammogram will be performed by a female mammographer who will ask you to remove your clothes from the waist up. We do not usually offer a gown to wear because fabric interferes with the images and so you would need to take it off again. However if you feel you need a gown then please ask your mammographer for one before you undress.

Your mammographer will take four X-rays, one at a time. This involves compressing each breast quite firmly between two plates. The compression only lasts for a few seconds before you are automatically released. Some women do find this painful but most women just experience a brief discomfort.

The compression is necessary to keep the breast still, in order to achieve focused images. It also helps to reduce the amount of radiation needed to take a diagnostic picture. Your mammographer will not apply more compression than you can bear.

The whole procedure takes about ten minutes.

### **What are the risks?**

A mammogram is a safe test. It involves a very small amount of radiation, equivalent to approximately eight weeks of the background radiation we are constantly exposed to from the atmosphere.

One in eight women will get breast cancer in their lifetime and having a mammogram only increases that risk by 1 in 49,000. Therefore, mammograms detect significantly more breast cancers than they cause and identifying breast cancer early, before it spreads to other parts of the body, is the key to saving lives.

### **Results**

If you are attending our breast clinic then you should receive your mammogram results on the same day.

If you are attending an annual appointment you will receive your results at your next clinic appointment.

### **Contact Us**

**Please contact the Imaging Help Desk in advance on 020 7288 5888 if:**

- You are unable to keep your appointment and would like to change it.
- You have a physical disability or are unable to stand unassisted. We can book you an extended appointment time so that you do not feel rushed during the procedure.