

UW Medicine



Breast Imaging Surveillance

After treatment for breast cancer

This handout explains how to monitor your breast health after your treatment for breast cancer.

What is breast imaging surveillance?

Breast imaging surveillance is screening for people who have already been treated for breast cancer. It uses mammography and other imaging to help your doctors find any second cancer early. Finding second breast cancer early can help increase survival.

When should I start breast imaging surveillance?

- If you received a **mastectomy**, you will keep having yearly *screening mammograms* for the other breast.
- If you received a **lumpectomy**, get a new *baseline mammogram* within 6 to 12 months after you finish treatment. This will be scheduled as a *diagnostic mammogram*.

What is a diagnostic mammogram?

In a diagnostic mammogram, we will:

- Take extra images of the breast that was recently treated
- Give you your results at the time of your imaging visit

Who will order my imaging surveillance?

Your breast care team will order your imaging. They will also review your results with you.



Most breast imaging surveillance includes regular mammograms.

Will my surveillance include an MRI?

Some women at high risk of cancer recurrence may have *magnetic resonance imaging* (MRI). This is done in addition to mammograms. Your breast care team will talk with you about whether they advise you to have a breast MRI.

After my new baseline mammogram, how often should I have screening mammograms?

We advise you to:

- Get a screening mammogram once a year. These mammograms are used to find issues when there are no symptoms.
- Have your imaging done in a clinic that uses a special method called *tomosynthesis* or “3D mammography.” Both University of Washington Medical Center and Seattle Cancer Care Alliance use 3D mammography.

The National Comprehensive Cancer Network and other leading cancer groups advise that women who were treated for breast cancer have screening mammograms once a year after their cancer treatment is complete.

What should I do if I have a new breast lump or pain?

If you notice a new breast lump or new pain, call your breast care team right away. Do not wait for your next screening mammogram. We do not use screening mammograms to assess new breast symptoms.

Questions?

Your questions are important. Call your breast care team if you have questions or concerns.
