

### What is a Mammogram?

- A **mammogram** is a special kind of picture taken of the breast using an x-ray machine. Doctors suggest that once a woman reaches 50 years old, she should get a mammogram every two years. But if you have strange symptoms or your family has a history of breast cancer, you might need to get checked earlier than 50.
- This test is super important because it can find breast cancer early, sometimes even before you can feel a lump. Finding cancer early gives you the best chance for treatment.
- Mammograms work better for spotting tumors in younger women under 50 because their breast tissue is denser, meaning it looks whiter on the x-ray. Since tumors also show up as white on a mammogram, they can be tricky to spot in dense breast tissue.
- For women aged 40-49, the U.S. Preventive Task Force suggests talking to your doctor about when and how often to get a mammogram. And women aged 40-74 who get mammograms are less likely to die from breast cancer compared to those who don't.

### What happens during a mammogram?

- You go into a room with the person taking the picture.
- Your breast gets placed between two x-ray panels to flatten it out for a clear picture. It only takes a few seconds.
- The whole thing takes about 20 minutes.
- If you have breast implants, they might need to take extra pictures to see all the breast tissue."

### Helpful Tips:

- Don't schedule a mammogram when you have your period because your breasts might be sensitive or swollen.
- Avoid using lotions, powders, perfumes, or deodorant before the exam because they can look like white spots on the x-ray.
- Before the exam, ask any questions or share your worries.
- Keep your mind busy during the exam. You can think of a happy place, a favorite song, or anything that cheers you up.
- Tell the person doing the exam how you're feeling at any point.
- Remember, only a small number of mammograms find cancer, about 2 to 4 out of every 1,000.
- Finding breast cancer early is crucial! Many women live long and healthy lives when it's caught early.

To schedule an appointment with your primary care provider at Share Ourselves, please call **949-270-2100**.