

## BREAST SCREENING WITH MAMMOGRAPHY IN ONTARIO

### About Mammography Technology

Mammography is the primary test used to screen for breast cancer. Traditionally, women were screened with screen film mammography, in which an image was captured on, and viewed on a film. With advances in technology, digital mammography was developed, where images of the breast were no longer viewed on film, but were viewed and assessed on a computer screen.

There are two types of digital mammography systems referred to as Direct Radiography (DR) and Computed Radiography (CR).

- Direct Radiography (DR) – the image is captured and is immediately electronically processed as a digital image.
- Computed Radiography (CR) – the image is captured within a cassette on an image plate and processed as a digital image. An external reading device is needed to generate the digital image.

Mammography with CR technology is used nationally and internationally, and currently accounts for 24 percent of all mammography machines in the province of Ontario.

### About Breast Cancer Screening with Mammography

Mammograms are the best way to find breast cancer early. But, they are not perfect.

- They may miss some cancers. Also, some cancers develop in the interval between screens. However, many studies have shown that regular mammograms reduce the risk of dying from breast cancer.
- Some cancers that appear on a mammogram may never progress to the point where a woman has symptoms during her lifetime. Therefore, some women may have surgery or treatment for a breast cancer that would never have been life threatening.
- Not all cancers found at screening can be cured. However, in Ontario most women (88 percent) are alive and well five years after the diagnosis of breast cancer.

Women are encouraged to talk to their healthcare provider or visit the [Time to Screen](#) tool to find out the right time to be screened.

## **About Breast Cancer in Ontario**

Breast cancer is the most common cancer in women and is the second leading cause of cancer deaths in females in Ontario. In 2013, it is estimated that approximately 9,400 Ontario women will be diagnosed with breast cancer and that about 2,000 will die from the disease. There are almost two million Ontario women between the ages of 50 to 74 years potentially eligible for breast cancer screening.

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