

## **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

### ***Healthcare Providers***

**1. What is mammography? What is the difference between mammography using CR and DR 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 digital direct radiography (DR) and computed radiography (CR).

- DR – the image is captured and is immediately electronically processed as a digital image.
- 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.

**2. What does this mean for women who have been screened with CR mammography?**

Mammography as a breast cancer screening test remains the most effective way to detect breast cancer in average risk women.

The chance of having an undiagnosed cancer in women who have been screened with mammography using CR is extremely low.

Women can contact the clinic where they were last screened to find out what type of mammography technology they were last screened with and their choices regarding their next screening appointment. A list of all clinics that offer breast mammography is available at [www.cancercare.on.ca/mammogram](http://www.cancercare.on.ca/mammogram). Women can also contact Cancer Care Ontario at 1-800-668-9304 Monday to Friday 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. for more information.

**3. Do I need to contact my patients to inform them of the technology upgrade?**

We encourage healthcare providers to discuss the technology transition with their patients, with a specific focus on the benefits and harms of screening. Mammography remains the most effective way to detect breast cancer in average risk women.

The chance of having an undiagnosed cancer in women who have been screened with mammography using CR is extremely low.

Women should be informed that they can contact the clinic where they were last screened to find out what type of mammography technology they were last screened with and their choices regarding their next screening appointment. A list of all clinics that offer breast mammography is available at [www.cancercare.on.ca/mammogram](http://www.cancercare.on.ca/mammogram). Women can also contact Cancer Care Ontario at 1-800-668-9304 Monday to Friday 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. for more information.

**4. What should I advise my patient to do if they have recently been screened or are due for screening?**

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**5. If CR mammography is not as effective as DR mammography how did it get approved?**

Health Canada licences medical technology for sale and use where the evidence submitted by the manufacturer demonstrates that it meets accepted safety and efficacy criteria. Health Canada would be best placed to provide additional information regarding the approval process. Mammography with CR technology is used nationally and internationally, and currently accounts for 24 percent of all mammography machines in the province of Ontario.

**6. Could CR be used in conjunction with another technology (e.g., ultrasound) so my patients don't have to wait?**

No. There is no evidence to support the combination of CR mammography with other imaging modalities for breast cancer screening.

**7. Where should I refer my patient to for screening?**

For a list of mammography clinics in your area, visit [www.cancercare.on.ca/mammogram](http://www.cancercare.on.ca/mammogram).