

Frequently asked Questions about 3D Mammography at Saints Medical Center

What is Tomosynthesis (3D Mammography)?

Tomosynthesis is a new technology available at Saints Medical Center that produces a 3D image of the breast tissue. Unlike conventional mammography, which takes a picture of the entire breast in one exposure, Tomosynthesis or 3D Mammography takes pictures from multiple angles and uses computer processing to build these pictures into a 3D image similar to a movie. The radiologist can page through the thin layers of the entire breast.

What are the benefits of Tomosynthesis?

- 3 D mammography improves radiologists' ability to screen for and detect potential Breast cancers.
- Tomosynthesis helps radiologists' pinpoint size, shape, and location of abnormalities.
- It can help distinguish harmless abnormalities from real tumors, leading to fewer callbacks and less anxiety for women.
- The radiologists from Mass General Imaging currently interpret the tomosynthesis and mammograms performed at Saints Medical Center.

What will I experience if I have Tomosynthesis?

Tomosynthesis is a complement to standard mammography and is performed at the same time and on the same scanner. There is very little difference in experience or time for the patient.



How new is Tomosynthesis?

- Pioneered at Mass General Imaging, Tomosynthesis received FDA approval February 11, 2011.
- Saints Medical Center is the first center in the Merrimack Valley to have tomosynthesis.

Is Radiation used in Tomosynthesis?

- Adding tomosynthesis does involve a minimal amount of additional radiation compared with the standard digital mammogram.
- The radiation dose for the combined standard mammogram and tomosynthesis is under the FDA regulated limit for standard mammography.
- The total dose is minimal and of negligible risk to the patient, while the additional information available to the radiologist outweighs any potential risk.

Who should get Tomosynthesis?

Tomosynthesis is approved for all women who would be undergoing a standard mammogram, in both the screening and diagnostic setting. While clinical trials have shown benefit to all women undergoing tomosynthesis, the benefit is greatest in women with dense breast tissue.

Tomosynthesis at Saints Medical Center

Tomosynthesis is available at Saints Medical Center in Lowell and Saints Women's Center for Health and Wellness in North Andover.

Please call 978-322-2450 to schedule your annual screening mammogram appointment at either of our locations. For additional information, please visit our website, www.saintsmedicalcenter.com/breastimaging.