

# Preparing for Your Breast Tomosynthesis

## For patients at the Rapid Diagnostic Centre

Read this resource to learn:

- How to prepare
- What to expect during breast tomosynthesis
- What questions to ask your doctor
- Where to get more information

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## About breast tomosynthesis

### What is breast tomosynthesis?

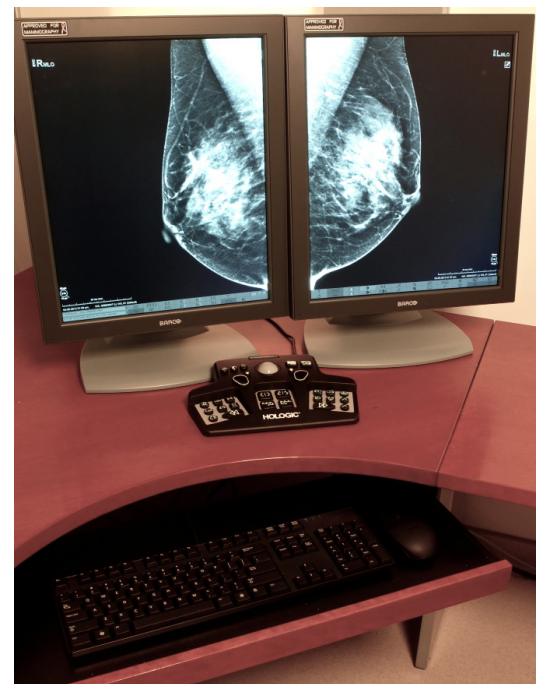
Breast tomosynthesis (pronounced toh-moh-SIN-thah-sis) is a type of mammogram. This test produces 3-dimensional (3D) images of the inside of your breasts. The images are created using x-rays and computer software.

This is a new type of scan. More research is needed to show if this is a better option than a normal mammogram.

### How is this different from a normal mammogram?

A mammogram takes 2 x-ray images across the whole breast. Breast tomosynthesis takes 11 x-ray images across many angles of the breast. The images are combined in a computer program to make a 3D image.

Breast tomosynthesis uses low dose x-rays. This is the same as a normal mammogram. But, it does take more x-rays images than a mammogram during the test. This means that you will be exposed to a little more radiation. Even with a little more radiation, the test is still safe.



### Why do I need breast tomosynthesis?

This test will provide a clear image of the inside of your breast. This type of mammogram may be a good option for people with dense breast tissue. It makes breast cancer easier for the radiologist to see. This type of mammogram is not the best option for everyone. The breast radiologist will decide if it is the right test for you.

## Ask your doctor these questions:

- Why do I need breast tomosynthesis?
- How long will it take?
- Will it hurt?
- When will my results be ready?
- Who will give me my results? Do I need to book an appointment?
- What will the results show? What are the next steps?

## Before a breast tomosynthesis

### How can I prepare for my breast tomosynthesis?

Do this on the morning of your scan:

- **Do not use deodorant or scented products around your underarm and breast area.** The metal in these products can show up on the x-ray.
- **Wear comfortable clothes.** Wear a 2-piece outfit that will be easy to take off and put on.

### What should I bring to the appointment?

- ✓ **Your health card (OHIP card).** If you do not have an OHIP card, please bring another form of government photo ID (such as a driver's license, passport, or other provincial health card).

## During the breast tomosynthesis

### Who will do my breast tomosynthesis?

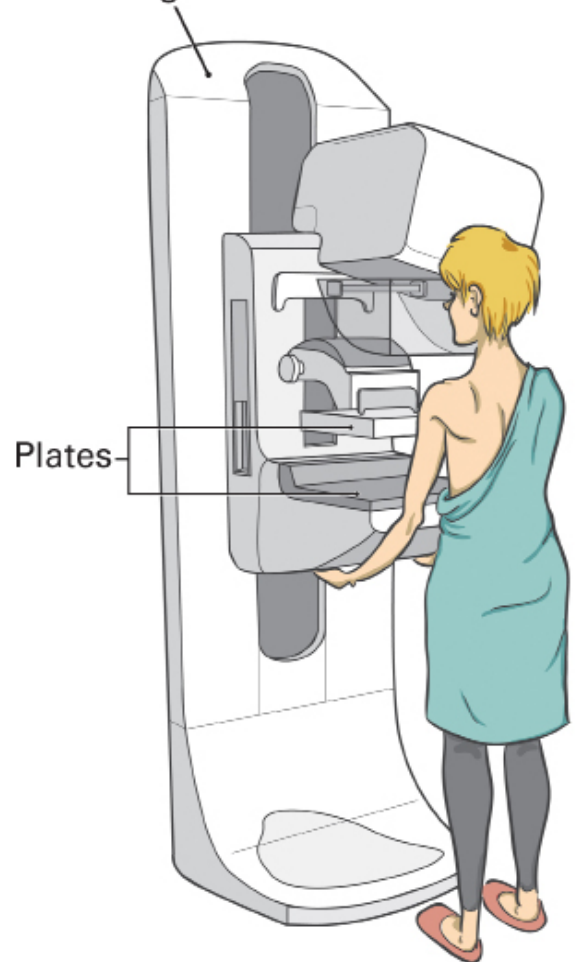
A breast technologist will do the breast tomosynthesis. A breast radiologist will review and interpret the images. A breast radiologist is a doctor who specializes in breast imaging.

### What happens during a breast tomosynthesis?

- You change into a hospital gown.
- You stand in front of the mammogram machine.
- The technologist places your breast on a flat plastic plate.
- They then put a second plate down on top of your breast. This holds your breast still. You will feel a light pressure.
- The machine moves in an arc around you. It takes the x-ray images as it moves. This lasts only a few seconds.
- The x-ray images are then sent to a computer. The computer puts them together to make a 3D picture.

The technologist does the breast tomosynthesis on one breast at a time.

Mammogram machine



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### How long does the breast tomosynthesis take?

The scan takes about 10 minutes.

## **After your breast tomosynthesis**

### **What should I do to take care of myself after the tomosynthesis?**

You do not need to do anything special after the test.

### **When will my results be ready?**

Your nurse practitioner will let you know after the testing appointment.

They will give you an appointment card with the time and place for your 2nd appointment to talk about the test results. This appointment may be on the day of testing or it may be a few days later.

### **What will my results show?**

The results will help the team determine if the breast changes you have are benign (not cancer) or cancer. This will help you and your health care team plan what care you may need.

### **How can I deal with stress during this time?**

Getting tested for breast changes can be stressful. It is normal to have feelings of anxiety and distress.

These feelings can change over time. It may not be the same while you are waiting to receive testing. It may change during testing. It may also change while you are waiting for your results. Each person's experience is different. There is no right or wrong way to feel about this. This experience may mean different things to different people.

Think about what has helped you get through stressful and uncertain times in the past.

Try these tips to see if they offer you some relief:

- **Talk to a supportive partner, family member or friend.**
- **Do an activity to help keep your mind busy.** Try something you enjoy. Focusing on something other than the tests and results may help. For example reading, listening to music, going to a movie, seeking spiritual guidance or going for a walk.
- **Read trusted health information.** This may help if you prefer to be informed before testing and while you wait for your results. The Princess Margaret Patient and Family Library has many resources for patients and families. Find out more about the Library below.

If you would like to speak to someone about your concerns or feelings, please let your health care team know.

## Where can I get more information?

If you would like more information, go to:

Patient and Family Library

Main atrium, Princess Margaret Cancer Centre

Phone: 416 946 4501 extension 5383

Website: [www.library.theprincessmargaret.ca](http://www.library.theprincessmargaret.ca)

The Patient and Family Library offers trusted information about:

- cancer
- support organizations and services
- cancer treatment and care
- much more

Here you will find computer stations, books, brochures, DVDs, audio books, electronic books and CDs. Trained staff and volunteers can help with your questions and help you to find the information and resources you need.



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